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THE TYRANNY OF SHAMS

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THE TYRANNY OF SHAMS

BY

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"THE IRON CARDINAL" ETC.

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PREFACE

THIS book is a frank criticism of most of the dominant ideas and institutions of our time : a confession of faith in nearly all the more daring heresies which hold, so to say, the firing line of our literature : a conception of a new social order and new planetary arrangement. It is therefore candidly egoistic, and I should like to explain the circumstances in which it was designed and written.

It was conceived, and much of it was written, during the long voyage from Australia to England. At that time I had issued, if I may include the introduction to English readers of foreign writers, some fifty publications, and in these I had generally described remote periods of history, or even remoter periods of the earth's story or distant regions of the universe. Many had asked me to tell them things more intimate and important than the way in which stars were formed, or the manners of extinct Dinosaurs and ancient empresses : asked if thirty years' study of philosophy, science, and history had given me no interest in, or light upon, the problems of the hour. In Australasia this request was made more insistently than ever. Our ancient prejudices have been transplanted into the soil of the new world,

and they have thriven there, like the gorse, the sparrow, the rabbit, and so many other pests which sentimental colonists have introduced in order to remind them of "home." But new ideas also have been imported, and they find a rich soil in the free, unconventional, enterprising colonial mind. Men and women are asking the same questions there as in London and New York.

The general drift or implication of these questions obsessed me daily during the slow traverse of the Southern Ocean. Day after day the great liner visibly rounded this vast ball of metal which we call our earth ; and to me there is no more impressive symbol than this of the power and the future of man. Some complain that at sea they feel the earth and man and man's concerns made trivial by the great fires which blaze through the darker sky. But largeness is not greatness, and a vast prairie in some inaccessible region does not make less precious the little plot of earth at your door that you can make beautiful. Your predominant feeling, when you round the globe and see with your own eye its limitations, is one of power. This sphere, you feel, is the principality of man ; and there never was a power so despotic and far-reaching as the power of a united race would be. You feel as if the earth could be embraced in the arms of a giant, and humanity is the giant. If men were agreed in their designs, the earth would be as clay in the hand of the potter. It would prove as passive and tractable as the child's ball of plasticine

—if all, or the great part of, men and women were agreed as to the shape it was desirable to impose on it. In our age differences of ideal restrain the hand and prevent us from giving a fairer face to the earth. The power of a united mankind would be something akin to omnipotence. Every man or woman who has seen the earth with this larger vision must seethe with impatience to end this conflict of old traditions and new ideas which paralyses our hands; to do what he or she can to accelerate that final harmony of conviction which will set free the fingers of the Great Potter. That is the controlling sentiment of this little book.

It happens that, before the book reaches the public, one of those traditions which it assails has spread a ghastly devastation over the face of the earth. For nearly twenty years I have used my slender opportunities as speaker and writer to denounce the military machine: to imagine the mighty resources we waste on militarism and war transferred to those enterprises which seek to brighten the earth and make the hearts of men and women lighter. Now the little sermon, which many feeble voices were preaching, is taken up by an orator whose voice thunders from pole to pole, whose words are blood-curdling realities. Ten thousand million sterling, perhaps, poured into the sea in eighteen months: ten million men, perhaps, prematurely blasted off the earth or stricken for life: and a trail of blood and tears and misery that all the mighty fertility of the earth will take a

generation to obliterate ! Nor does this outpour of horror merely mean that *one* feature of our life needs reconsideration. We could not have retained this military machine, with its ever-present danger of an appalling calamity, if our minds were generally sane, alert, unclogged by shams.

One inquires how it is that a generation which boasts of its wisdom and humanity can retain this worst survival of barbarism, and one finds that the evil is connected with a dozen other evils and protected by a general mental debility. The habit of tracing this calamity to the peculiar criminality of another nation, and dwelling only on our own heroism and self-sacrifice in meeting this menace, is in itself a very grave danger. We may be entirely certain that, as long as we retain the military machinery for settling quarrels, there will be wars. How came the machinery to linger amongst us in the twentieth century ? At once we light upon a dozen other disorders of our life. This remissness in civilising international intercourse argues a grave indifference to a most important task on the part of our political servants, and an equally grave absence of pressure and direction on the part of their supporters. It reveals a dangerously slovenly condition of our industrial world, a very serious defect in our educational system, a standing menace in the encouraged thoughtlessness of the mass of our people, a general flabbiness, haziness, and anæmia of what may be called the intellectual part of our public life.

This is true of all nations,—it may be the turn of the United States, or Norway, or Argentina tomorrow,—but it is most seriously true of England. Do not let us fuddle our minds with the kind of rhetoric one addresses to schoolboys. We have, in the first year of the war, betrayed a sluggishness, a lack of foresight and initiative, a feebleness of organisation, which ought to sober any race, however wealthy. Our Government knew, or ought to have known, since the spring of 1912, that just this war was threatening us; and, when it occurred, they made a virtue of the fact that we were “the least prepared nation in Europe.” They took nine months to begin to organise our resources, or to perceive that it was necessary to do so. Plainly, there is something profoundly, comprehensively wrong with our public life. We shall “muddle through,” because we have the resources, and because the Allies outnumber their opponents by fifty per cent. But if in a future war we are compelled to face a numerically equal opponent, England will, if she retains these faults, see her royal standard in the dust. As it is, the cost of our ineptitude will be prodigious.

So I am confirmed in my design to declare what seems to me to be wrong with our life. I choose the form of a direct challenge of old traditions mainly because they so oppress and benumb the public mind that new ideals do not get a fair consideration. But it will be found that behind the series of challenges there is a series of affirmations,

and these make up a constructive ideal of life. Probably few will accept this ideal in its entirety, though each chapter advocates a reform which has millions of adherents. It is, however, not based on any 'ism, least of all on dogmatism. There is a view of, or attitude toward, life expounded in the first chapter, and behind each particular claim. But each section deals with a specific department of life and must find its justification within the limits of that department. If any regret that the work does not embody a profound philosophy of life, I must reply that I passed through philosophy thirty years ago, and came out into science and history in search of reality: and that philosophers do not seem to me to be either agreed among themselves or in any close relationship to the human problems I discuss.

Many will advise me, too, that a man would do well to conceal the more offensive of his heresies, in order to gain a more patient hearing for the others. That is the usual and prudent practice, no doubt; but this book has been written in a mood of fiery impatience with untruth, and this has forbidden compromise. Night by night, as I sit on the deck of the ship, I watch the dark purple pall drop swiftly over the last flush of the tropical sky; and I know that, each night, it shrouds the faces of thousands of men, women, and children whose chance of happiness is gone for ever. We are arguing to-day about man's ailments just as the Greeks were arguing in the Agora at Athens

two thousand years ago, or as men argued in the garden of Plato or of Epicurus. Meantime almost countless millions have lived in pain and squalor, and died in delusive hope, under the curse of those ancient traditions which we will not discard. Therefore I am impatient: I cannot sit in quiet enjoyment of the sunshine that is granted me. It will be found that no man appraises more highly than I the advance we have made in modern times, and that I nowhere exaggerate the darker features of life. If at times I write fiercely, cynically, even bitterly, it is not from pessimism, but from fulness and fire of optimism. My controlling thought is, as I said, a consciousness of our power.

There are two types of people into whose hands this book may fall. The first is the man or woman whose nerves must not be disturbed by the spectacle of the misery of less fortunate beings: who finds life good, and instinctively resents any proposals to tamper with its foundations. These people are no more open to blame, as a rule, than the prophet is entitled to praise for his ardour. We do not choose our temperament, whatever else we choose. But one does not appeal to these comfortable people. They would have refined and pleasant things about them always, and they shrink from the vaults where, they dimly know, ugly and sordid and writhing things are crowded together: lest their glance fall on some yellow and distorted face whose hollow cheeks, or eyes bloodshot with pain or brutality, would disturb

the even pleasure of their lives. So be it. Let it be written in stark letters on their marble stones, when the last peach has dropped from their relaxing fingers: My ideal was to enjoy life, and to let the devil take the hindmost.

Do not let me be misunderstood. The enjoyment of life is the supreme ideal advocated in this book. I loathe asceticism, either Christian or Stoic. But I write for the second type of man or woman: the people who are strong and healthy enough to enjoy every pleasure that life affords, yet keep some thought for the unhappiness of others: who think it a normal part even of a pleasant and refined life, especially a leisured life, to spare some hours for seeking how the world may be improved for less fortunate folk: who, precisely because they love the sunlight, ask if it cannot be devised that all men and women and children shall have a larger share of it. Their chief difficulty is that, unhappily, the new prophets are as discordant as the old. A few centuries ago, when you crossed London Bridge, or the Pont Neuf at Paris, or the Ponte Vecchio at Florence, a score of rival quacks or charlatans (in the literal sense) cried in your ears the virtues of their conflicting remedies. To-day just so many conflicting social physicians cry their wares in the streets. They oppose each other almost as bitterly as they oppose the older traditions. How shall a busy man or woman decide among them? What fixed and unalterable principle, in this world of dis-

solving creeds, can you adopt for the testing of their truth or untruth ?

A very grave and sincere difficulty. Therefore, again, I have chosen to attack what seem to me to be shams : which I would define as untruths that the millions venerate as truths. The work of reform will proceed very slowly and very precariously until these are resolutely discredited and dethroned. In each case, it is true, it will be found that the dethronement of an error enthrones a truth ; but I insist that we will pay no grave and practical attention to constructive schemes until we fully realise the blunders and brutalities of our present civilisation. The discord of our social prophets does not excuse us from perceiving these.

As to fixed and unalterable principles, it seems to me that two, at least, are not disturbed by the ground-quakes of our time. Perhaps they stand with more conspicuous firmness when so many other " eternal verities " have fallen. The first is the principle of truthfulness or sincerity. Of this it need be said only that, if there are any parts of our human tradition which the larger mind of our age discovers to be untrue, they ought to be rejected at once ; and the more closely they are woven into our social fabric, the more speedily and more apprehensively they ought to be torn out. The second and greater principle is the aim of arresting suffering and diffusing happiness as far as possible. I will consider this presently, and merely state here that these chapters have been written solely

in the name and under the inspiration of that ideal. And if my words are at times violent, the violence is due solely to a great eagerness for the speedier coming of a brighter and more intelligent age and to a sincere abhorrence of cant and shams and all that lengthens this grey twilight of civilisation.

J. M.

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THE TYRANNY OF SHAMS

CHAPTER I

THE PHILOSOPHY OF REVOLT¹

ALTHOUGH this work does not embody any system of speculation about the universe, any creed or 'ism or large and abstruse set of principles, it must begin with a careful study of the phenomenon of revolt. Never before was there such an age of general and feverish restlessness; never was there such quaking of the deepest foundations of old institutions, such tottering of thrones and altars. From every intellectual centre the disturbing waves radiate. Round London, Berlin, and New York the rumbling is habitual. Already they perceive it in Tokyo and Peking and Constantinople. Tomorrow it will break on the ear in Teheran and Lhasa. The same questions are asked all over the earth. I have discussed them with millionaires at the Ritz and with great ladies at Claridge's: with students in their universities and miners in

¹ This chapter is, with a few alterations, reproduced from *The English Review*, October 1914.

their cottages : with learned professors in Rome or New York, and with notorious anarchists in obscure corners of Paris : with working girls in Melbourne, with Maoris in Wellington, with Chinese and Hindus and alert, full-blooded Africans. I have been invited to discuss them with a Polynesian princess and to lecture on them in Fiji, and I have had letters on them from Japanese settlers in British Columbia and negro tailors in British Guiana. The same questions everywhere : religious doctrines and political forms, education and industry, marriage and woman—almost every ideal and institution we have inherited. And the persistent note that resounds from continent to continent is the note of rebellion.

Very different feelings are inspired by this characteristic fact of modern life. To some it seems that this melting of the rigid framework of traditions is a welcome sign of spring and growth : that a long winter, which had slowed the blood of the earth and retarded the development of civilisation, is over at last, and little, shapeless, promising shoots of new ideals are rising from the loosened soil. To others it seems as if the binding fabric of our civilisation were weakened and we were in danger of returning to barbarism. Surely those old traditions did hold together the structure of our civilisation ? And surely it is impossible to replace in a few generations the links of a planet-wide human society ? The shades of dead Memphis and Babylon and Nineveh, of Athens and Rome

and Bagdad, of Venice and Genoa and Florence, pass before their anxious eyes. In each case, they remind us, this same moral, social, and intellectual restlessness preceded death.

The inevitable specialism of our age adds to the confusion. Life is a connected whole, yet neither research nor reform can now be other than sectional. We devote ourselves to a candid study of some particular reform, and we find it a thoroughly reasonable proposal, a deduction from principles that we are bound to admit. But we have not had leisure to discover the indisputable principles of other reforms; and, when we hear the demand of change and progress rising on one side after another—in the Church, the State, the Home, the School, and so on—we remark sententiously that rebellion is becoming a fashion, that our generation is getting feverish or neurotic, that we must insist on authority somewhere. We repeat plausible phrases about the decay of respect and the wisdom of the race. We fasten on symptoms of disorder—without inquiring very closely whether the disorder is new or has been recently aggravated—and we conclude that conservatism is a social duty: that, at all events, we will admit reform only by the inch. We fancy ourselves the guardians of the *palladium*.

Quite apart from purely selfish motives, some of the closest observers of our age do differ radically in diagnosis and prescription. The same movements are symptoms of health to one man, symptoms of disease to another. Take the enlargement of

divorce, the decay of clerical authority, the industrial revolt, or the rebellion of women. There seems to be no common ground left on which the observers may meet with any hope of agreement. The old religious and political standards will now hopelessly divide any roomful of educated men and women. You propose, perhaps, to fall back on moral standards—the ground on which “all reasonable people” unite—and someone quotes against you half a dozen of the most brilliant writers of Europe and America. Hopes and lamentations, inspired by precisely the same facts of life, mingle confusedly in our literature, and men and women of large heart and little leisure seem to be condemned to a sterile perplexity or a selfish absorption in business and pleasure. What, at all events, is the meaning or purpose of life? And how is this spreading rebellion related to it?

First let us examine the grounds of the very distressing forecasts of the Conservative. In the vast majority of cases that are worth examining one will find that the pessimism has not very firm foundations. Your dismal prophet is usually a man with an ancient gospel which we are discarding, or a new gospel which does not attract us. The appeal to the modern world, he realises, must be utilitarian: he must show us that, without him, we perish. So he recklessly heaps up before our eyes statistics of crime and consumption and lunacy and alcohol: he makes weird and totally inaccurate statements about France or the United States or some other

country : he marshals the shades of dead empires—which seem to have died of a wonderful complication of modern maladies—before us with appropriate rhetoric.

Now to this kind of conservatism, which says that we are decaying, I reply that, on every positive test of national health, we are more flourishing than we ever were before. Dark as the earth is, it was never brighter than it is to-day, or more full of promise for the morrow. The war is not inconsistent with this general statement, as I will show later. A failure to advance in one direction does not alter the fact that we have advanced in a hundred others ; and the gross behaviour of one nation does not destroy the gain that half a dozen other nations were ready to behave with a new decency in warfare. As to that " lesson of history " which is stridently read to us by men and women whose command of history is not otherwise conspicuous, I would remind them that the civilisation of dead empires always reached its height just before, or at the time when, they began to decay. Does anyone suggest that we ought not further to develop our civilisation lest we also decay ? However, I have sufficiently discussed elsewhere this nonsense about " laws of history " ; and I will show later that these older empires decayed, not because of their high development of intellect and fine sentiment, which leads to revolt, but from the natural defect of those very institutions which our conservatives defend.

We are not decaying. England is, for every class of its citizens, an immeasurably finer place to live in than it was a hundred years ago. I speak on the strength of a rigorous comparison of the moral and social life of England a century ago with that of modern England, but I cannot give the facts here. Let it suffice to make plain that I have no sympathy with pessimists and preachers of penance and austerity, of any school. The world improves, and improves more rapidly than it ever did before. What stirs one's impatience is the consciousness that we could, and do not, move with infinitely greater speed: that we tolerate abuses and shams which insult our intelligence and mock our professions of humanity.

What, then, are the grounds of the optimistic view of this widespread revolt? Let us admit that conservatism, in the sense of an attitude of caution, is a virtue. We would not try unknown drugs on the life of an individual, and we ought not to apply untried recipes to the life of forty million people. Yet it is precisely from this medical world that we gather valuable hints of progress. By two centuries of sober and heroic labour the physician has brought the greater part of our maladies under control. He would tell you, in private, that he has a hope of eventually being able to check all disease and prolong life. The *laissez-faire* attitude is unknown in medical science. It is unknown in our technical and commercial worlds. We have made stupendous progress, not by conserving, but by

innovating : not asking if a machine or a system worked well, but if we could devise a better. In science—in all on which we pride ourselves in modern civilisation—we have followed the progressive principle : we have cultivated revolt. Since we began to do so, we have raised the level of our civilisation in each generation.

It is therefore not surprising that many are asking whether we ought not to extend the progressive principle to our religions, moralities, politics, economic systems, schools, domestic and civic and social traditions. It is, in other words, quite natural that there should be a demand for, not one reform only, but a hundred reforms, in modern life. We are justly, wisely proud of what is distinctive and superior in our civilisation : advance, better organisation, economy of waste, greater efficiency. The mystery is that so many would restrict this improvement to what they call the “ lower ” material departments of life, and keep a strict guard against the reformer at the frontiers of their spiritual or political world. The modern rebellion is a very logical effort to apply these very successful principles to as much of life as is susceptible of improvement.

This effort, further, coincides with the quite dominant and characteristic note of modern culture : evolution. We forget sometimes that until half a century ago Europe was oppressed by an entirely wrong view of the earth's resources. Plato put a philosophic anathema on the earth. This material

mass, he said, was a barren thing. Order, truth, beauty, love had to come to it, in fitful gleams, from a world beyond, over which man had no control. We know now that Plato was wrong. Order, truth, beauty, and love have developed on the earth—they are “sublunary” things—and man can control their sources and enlarge their proportions. They do not properly make men great : men make them great. They are as surely under our direction as are applied science and commerce and the franchise. We can cultivate them as we now cultivate pansies or sheep. It depends on *us* if lies and disorder and dishonour are to linger among us, or if truth and justice and beauty are to prevail.

Again therefore it is quite natural that we should hear a demand for a more extensive use of these powers of ours. The ships and ploughs and illuminants of a hundred years ago were made by the same men, or the same generations of men, as the religions and politics and moralities of the time. Why assume that the wisdom of the race was almost infallible in its spiritual and more difficult creations, but capable of enormous improvement on the material side? Conservatism, as anything more than an attitude of caution and prudence, has not a plausible air.

It is well also to regard the essential or characteristic line of human evolution. Apart from a few who are caught by a transient attempt to glorify instinct, we agree that the development of intelligence is one of the main sources of progress.

Now this great and general awakening of intelligence in recent decades was bound to lead to a good deal of challenging of old traditions. That was precisely why the grandfathers of our bishops and peers opposed it. This higher intelligence of the race is now assisted in its decisions by a vastly greater and more accurate knowledge of man and the universe than our grandparents had ; and the cheapening of literature dimly conveys this knowledge to millions who were left out of account when the traditional maps of life were drafted. The artisan discusses economics and theology. The Tonga Islander works out mathematical problems. I met a pure-blooded negro, with a European degree in philosophy, who told me that he had been forced to resign his chair in an African Mohammedan college because of his advanced ideas ! Once I discussed with a group of miners industrial questions and religion from twelve to three in the morning, over pots of beer, in a little inn on the west coast of New Zealand, a hundred miles from anything like a town.

It is quite impossible for this spreading and better informed intelligence to bow humbly to the ideas of an earlier generation. It is going to think for itself, at all events. The old traditions must be revised throughout. Revision is not particularly dangerous except to errors. And already we have discovered that our political and religious and social oracles have been teaching a good deal of error. We begin to suspect that many things

besides the divine right of kings and the eternal torment of the wicked may not be strictly accurate. We had better reconsider all our ways of living.

The second permanent strain of human evolution is the development of fine sentiment. The notion that the world is becoming more preponderantly intellectual, and that progress along our present lines means a limitation of sentiment, is inaccurate. We are working toward a healthy equilibrium. Sentimental people—those in whom a starving of intellect or disuse of muscle has surcharged the nervous system with morbid energy—will become more balanced, more intellectual. Ancient phrases and modern shibboleths will not be able to induce in them an instinctive warmth or agitation: they will have to pass the bar of reason before they reach what one might call the executive department of personality. But sentiment—deep and healthy feeling—has a precious use in life. The development of fine sentiment is as necessary as the cultivation of reason to the advance of man and of civilisation. We find this illustrated in all the older civilisations when they reach their highest point. We are picking up this strain of development to-day, and, since civilisation is now too widely diffused ever to perish again, we may assume that it will continue. Now this finer sentiment of our time demands the revision of our traditions and institutions no less imperiously than our higher intelligence does. We cannot leave behind the callousness and brutality of the Middle Ages and at the same

time retain medieval practices. Intellectually and emotionally we are improving, and we must expect that, as our finer powers grow, there will be an increasing demand for revision and reconstruction. As Mr. Watson finely says :

“ Guests of the ages, at to-morrow’s door
 Why shrink we? The long track behind us lies,
 The lamps gleam and the music throbs before,
 Bidding us enter; and I count him wise
 Who loves so well man’s noble memories
 He needs must love man’s nobler hopes yet more.”

This is, I think, a correct analysis of the innovating spirit of modern times. These general considerations to which it is due are quite beyond discussion. One feels that one is almost perpetrating platitudes in describing them. In fact, we would to-day find only a negligible number of people who oppose progress and innovation altogether. They usually oppose it in one or two departments of life, and quite warmly applaud it in others. A Socialist-Ritualist clergyman, for instance, fiercely demands advance in the economic field, yet fences his own department of life with the most rigorous warnings against innovating trespassers. A Rationalist-Individualist feels that the Church is the most obvious and urgent field for innovation, and at the same time guards his economic world against it with a flaming sword. A Suffragist pours fiery scorn on our obstinate conservatism in regard to the franchise, and then discovers an even more obstinate and entirely sacred conservatism when other women claim something

more than political emancipation. It is this very general sectarianism which compels us to review the philosophy of revolt. These principles apply to the whole of life. All our institutions must be critically examined. The searchlight will not injure them if they are sound.

But how comes this sweetly reasonable philosophy to be converted into that passion for reform, that mordant and exasperating attack on institutions, which gives a special complexion to the literature of our time? For precisely the same reason as the invisible electric current leaps into incandescence when it passes through the sluggish particles of the filament of carbon or tungsten: resistance. The old faith is growing dim in our minds, and we have a suspicion that the thousands of men and women who, each night, terminate a life of pain or struggle or burden, will never see the sun rise again, on this or any other planet. We know that every decade in which we put off, with worn and hollow phrases, the abandonment of old errors, sees another generation pass away with just the same scars and traces of pain as those which scored the hearts of the dead two, and four, and six thousand years ago. We are vividly conscious that, quite apart from the myriads whose lives were embittered by poverty, or war, or a galling marriage-yoke, or the tyranny of some old tradition, there are further and vaster myriads who, whatever comfort they knew, might have been far happier, and now the sun has gone down on them for ever. There is

real and very serious ground for impatience. The acreage of squalor and misery and grossness is still appalling, and on every land lies the crushing burden of militarism; and this fearful visitation of war reminds us of the incalculable periodic cost of our folly. The soil of the planet is wet with blood and tears, and a great part of this inhuman rain might be arrested. Much has been done : it is just that which stings. You cannot look back on the darkness from which the race has issued without perceiving that man has the power to transform the face of the earth : without entertaining a reasoned and coldly intellectual conviction that a day will yet dawn on this planet when laughter, as of children on May morning, will ring from pole to pole, and life, for all its work, will be a holiday. And when this reasoned and just belief encounters the sullen or selfish indifference of men and women to their creative power, their insensitiveness to the evils that they or their fellows endure, it glows and spits fire.

It is quite easy to apologise for strong language : much easier than to justify the general lack of it. And this impatience cannot be rebuked by reminding us that the remedy of some of our ills is very obscure ; because the majority of people are indifferent to the very idea of reform. They shoulder burdens which they might at any moment lay aside for ever. Some of the greatest reforms that are pressed on us are not obscured by any serious controversy. Yet in every civilised nation the mass of the people

are inert and indifferent. Some even make a pretence of justifying their inertness. Why, they ask, should we stir at all? Is there such a thing as a duty to improve the earth? What is the meaning or purpose of life? Or has it a purpose?

One generally finds that this kind of reasoning is merely a piece of controversial athletics or a thin excuse for idleness. People tell you that the conflict of science and religion—it would be better to say, the conflict of modern culture and ancient traditions—has robbed life of its plain significance. The men who, like Tolstoi, seriously urge this point fail to appreciate the modern outlook on life. Certainly modern culture—science, history, philosophy, and art—finds no purpose in life: that is to say, no purpose eternally fixed and to be discovered by man. A great chemist said a few years ago that he could imagine “a series of lucky accidents”—the chance blowing by the wind of certain chemicals into pools on the primitive earth—accounting for the first appearance of life; and one might not unjustly sum up the influences which have lifted those early germs to the level of conscious beings as a similar series of lucky accidents.

But it is sheer affectation to say that this demoralises us. If there is no purpose impressed on the universe, or prefixed to the development of humanity, it follows only that humanity may choose its own purpose and set up its own goal; and the most elementary sense of order will teach us that this choice must be social, not merely individual.

In whatever measure ill-controlled individuals may yield to personal impulses or attractions, the aim of the race must be a collective aim. I do not mean an austere demand of self-sacrifice from the individual, but an adjustment—as genial and generous as possible—of individual variations for common good. Otherwise life becomes discordant and futile, and the pain and waste react on each individual. So we raise again, in the twentieth century, the old question of “the greatest good,” which men discussed in the Stoa Poikile and the suburban groves of Athens, in the cool *atria* of patrician mansions on the Palatine and the Pincian, in the Museum at Alexandria, and the schools which Omar Khayyám frequented, in the straw-strewn schools of the Middle Ages and the opulent chambers of Cosmo de’ Medici.

We answer, as men did in all those earlier debates, according to our temperament. One says culture, another character, another happiness, another pleasure, another efficiency. This discussion is often a mere exercise of wit, and very often we use a quite arbitrary standard in fixing what is “best,” or the greatest good. Probably the modern mind will put to itself the plain question: “What is the best purpose for the race, in its own interest, to adopt?” As we are not now clear that there are any other interests to be consulted, this is the obvious form of the question. And when we do put it in this form, the old conflict begins to disappear. We see that a comprehensive ideal, embracing all the

classical answers, commends itself. We want more—we want as much as possible—culture, character, happiness, pleasure, and efficiency. We want a quicker and fuller development of man's highest and richest resources. But, if you look closely into it, there is one ultimate and commanding element in this broad ideal. It is happiness. Culture is a necessity of the race and luxury of the few. Character is supremely important, but you have now to prove to men that it is important. We do not bow any longer to arbitrary commands and categorical imperatives and Stoic laws. We have to be convinced that the cultivation of a high type of character will lessen suffering and brighten the earth. Pleasure, again, is, as Epicurus insisted, only a part of a large ideal of happiness. There is, in fact, no ground on which you can appeal to the mass of men to-day in favour of cultivation or idealism except this ground that it makes for greater happiness: and on that ground you may safely appeal to the whole race.

Sometimes, when you ascend the slopes of a range of hills,—the idea occurred to me during a walk from Chamonix to Montanvert,—the mists close round you, and the guiding peaks and contours are lost. Then, perhaps, some point breaks through the clouds, and you stride on confidently. This must apply to the most sceptical or nebulous mind of our generation. The old dream of a co-operative effort to improve life, to bring happiness to as many minds of mortals as we can reach,

shines above all the mists of the day. Through the ruins of creeds and philosophies, which have for ages disdained it, we are retracing our steps toward that height—just as the Athenians did two thousand years ago. It rests on no metaphysic, no sacred legend, no disputable tradition—nothing that scepticism can corrode or advancing knowledge undermine. Its foundations are the fundamental and unchanging impulses of our nature. Its features are as clear and attractive to the child as to the philosopher. Philosophers will, of course, declare it superficial; but we may remind them that all their supposed deeper probing of reality, from Pythagoras to Bergson, has ended in a confusion of contradictory guesses. Churchmen will declare with horror that it is “materialistic”; and we may remind *them* that for fifteen centuries they have taught Europe to place its highest good in happiness. If the happiness they promised is getting doubtful, we make sure of what we can. In truth, however, no nobler aim ever inspired action, and none is so fitted to appeal to modern man. It is, in fact, the mainspring of nearly all the progressive activity of our time. The more doubtful all else becomes, the more determined men and women are to be happy in this world. Thrones and creeds and institutions, even moral codes, are brought to judgment to-day before that ideal. It is more profitable to judge the living than the dead.

This ideal is the chief inspiration of the rebellious

temper of our age. The revolt which burns in so much of the abler literature of our time is an unselfish revolt, or non-selfish revolt : it is an outcome of that larger spirit which conceives the self to be a part of the general social organism, and it is therefore neither egoistic nor altruistic. It finds a sanction in the new intelligence, and an inspiration in the finer sentiments, of our generation, but the glow which chiefly illumines it is the glow of the great vision of a happier earth. It speaks of the claims of truth and justice, and assails untruth and injustice, for these are elemental principles of social life ; but it appeals more confidently to the warmer sympathy which is linking the scattered children of the race, and it urges all to co-operate in the restriction of suffering and the creation of happiness. The advance guard of the race, the men and women in whom mental alertness is associated with fine feeling, cry that they have reached Pisgah's slope ; and in increasing numbers men and women are pressing on to see if it be really the Promised Land. That is the spirit of the reform-movement of our times. Popes anathematise our age, and the clergy of all sects bemoan its "materialism," yet it is exulting in a wider and higher idealism than any that ever yet stirred the heart of man. For we now know from what dark and brutal origins we came, and we feel that, if we advance only as we are advancing, we may reach any height that any prophet ever yet saw in his visions.

It is very difficult to avoid what seem to be

rhetorical phrases in describing this age of ours : the age which some profess to find prosy and materialistic in comparison with the earlier age when a handful of plethoric land-owners ruled England, and little children worked in filthy rooms for twelve hours a day, and cut-throats, in most charming costumes, slew each other in the fields of London. I have not the least desire to use rhetoric ; I do but express my feeling, and what I take to be the feeling of " advanced " people generally, as it comes to me. But in this poetry there is the solidity of scientific prose. Some time ago I sailed slowly toward Teneriffe from the south. Eighty miles away, on a fine morning, the summit of the Peak showed its delicate contour in the clouds, hardly distinguishable from them. We thought it an illusion, a simulating cloud, because far below the summit the blue sky seemed to stretch from horizon to horizon. The Peak floated in the air. But, as we drew nearer, the blue band below it grew thinner, and at last it disclosed the massive bulk of the supporting mountain.

Speaking as a sober student of history and science, I say that this dream of a brighter and happier earth rests on no less solid a foundation. We see primitive man, blindly, and with infinite slowness, move towards civilisation : we see civilisation slowly, with many a tragic interruption, advance toward the modern age : and now we see the pace quicken enormously, and we find a new consciousness of power and a deliberate aim at higher things bear the

race onward. The reformer's belief in the future is a scientific deduction from the past.

The failure of the mass of people to co-operate in the realisation of this ideal is due, not to indolence or stupidity, but to the obsessing influence of the old traditions. They choke the fires of the mind : they make us insensible to the real enormity of a great deal of our social arrangements. Hence it is that the reformer's appeal is cast so frequently in a negative or aggressive form. The most powerful thing in our world is, not truth, but untruth ; and the most important thing in the world is to assail it. " Great is truth, and it will prevail," said an ancient writer. But the civilisation which gave birth to that sentiment died, and all its promising young truths perished with it, and Europe fell under the rule of lies for more than a thousand years. Untruth is millennia older than truth. Its roots run deep into the flesh of the heart, while the rootlets of truth are struggling for a frail clasp in the intellect. Great is untruth, and it will prevail—unless it is attacked unceasingly. No untruth ever died a natural death. Being the sacred truth of yesterday, it is usually entrenched in powerful corporations, embodied in the law and life of nations, enshrined in the tenacious affections of the millions. At one time you incurred sentence of death if you challenged it : now you incur slander, misrepresentation, and mockery. The race has been made docile to it by a kind of negative Eugenic—perhaps we ought to say Cacogenic—selection.

Yet nearly everything which the majority venerate as truth to-day began its career as heresy and will end it as lie.

So the first task of the well-wisher of mankind is to distinguish truth from untruth in our traditions. The story of man is a long story of the tyranny of consecrated shams, with occasional intervals of rebellion and advance to a higher stage. Rebellion is the salt of the earth. There comes a time in the history of every civilisation when the mind of a few rises high enough to survey critically that stream of traditions in which the majority lazily float. Then comes the inevitable revolt ; hence the close kinship which we feel across the ages with " the Preacher," with Socrates, with Omar Khayyám, with Erasmus, with Molière. We are at the same stage of evolution, with the difference that we moderns have an immense mass of knowledge of history and pre-history to aid us in testing the value of our traditions. Already we have discarded scores of old dogmas : in religion, politics, education, law, and every department of our common life. It would be folly to attempt to fence off any province of our life from this critical scrutiny. And since we obstinately retain many traditions which a very high proportion of properly educated people regard as unsound and mischievous, since these traditions are the chief obstacle to the advance of the race, one of the most pressing needs of our time is, surely, a stern campaign for the abolition of this tyranny of shams.

CHAPTER II

THE MILITARY SHAM

IN the original conception of this work militarism was selected as the first sham to be assailed because it is at once the most costly and the least excusable. The way to remove many of the blots on our civilisation is by no means plain. A dozen conflicting theories confront you, and each has a sufficiently large body of adherents to entitle it to consideration. But there are others in regard to which a large and practical measure of agreement has been reached. Here we do not need so much the subtle dissection of arguments and proposals as the kindling of that ardent and imperious sentiment which spurs a man or a race to action. The evil is recognised : the way to remedy it is sufficiently clear. What we need is, in the mass of the people, that fiery resentment of a hated tyranny which will shake the lie from its throne.

The first, the gravest, the most flagrant and most vivid in our minds at the moment of these obvious shams is war, with the military system which it involves. Here there is no sacred legend of a divine origin to confuse the minds of the ignorant. There

are legends of divine approval, it is true, but the clergy do not press them and they have little influence. War is a practice or institution which we clearly trace to the wild impulses and imperfect social forms of early man : even to the sheer passion of the beast that was still strong in him. No sophistry can obscure this bestial origin. We men and women of the twentieth century cling to one feature, at least, of an age on which we look back with high disdain : an age with which we would bitterly resent any comparison in point of intelligence and feeling. We may try to gild it with glittering phrases about a nation's honour, but we know, all the while, that the honour of a nation no more demands that it shall dye its hands in the blood of a sister-nation than the honour of an individual requires so barbaric a consolation.

We maintain this sham in an age when mechanical progress has made such strides that it has turned the industry of war into our chief and most oppressive occupation. We cannot, with all our sacrifices, find the means to carry out most urgent reforms in our social life ; we cannot put flesh on the bones and light in the eyes of poor children, or ease the lives of worn workers and helpless widows ; because we need these, and even greater resources, to sharpen the sabre for our neighbour's throat and enlarge the calibre of the tube that will scatter a hail of death. We have for years stood in such attitude confronting each other, we civilised nations, that on any day of any year the bugle might peal, and

the soil and seas of Europe be reddened with blood, and the pain which knows no remedy shoot through millions of homes ; and now the tragedy has opened, grimmer than the dourest prophet had ever pictured it. Why have we done this ? Ultimately, because man, the primeval savage, knowing nothing of our systems of justice, laid it down that the knife or the club was the guardian of a man's honour or property : proximately, because we of this highly cultivated age enthrone still one of the most ghastly shams which barbarism succeeded in enforcing on civilisation.

I have described it as a characteristic of our age that we are rising above the stream of traditions which flows from civilisation to civilisation, and are discovering that some of its sources are tainted. Now in the case of warfare this scrutiny of the origin and course of our traditions is comparatively easy. What we have discovered is so well known, and so little disputed, that it need hardly be related. It may be useful to state, at least, that very early man was probably not a combative and bloodthirsty savage. He lives to-day in such lowly peoples as the Veddahs and the Yahgans, and they are generally peaceful and averse from brawling. In this primitive man, however, there slumbered all the impulsive passion of earlier ancestors, and it was inevitable that a cultural rise should awaken it. When men became organised in tribes, when they became hunters and tillers of the soil, when they increased and wandered far afield, quarrels arose over women

and hunting grounds and other necessities, and the institution of warfare was established. Within the tribe there was already some kind of court, as a rule, before which a man could bring his neighbour for wrong-doing. For the quarrel between tribe and tribe there was no judge : the verdict lay with the heavier weapon and the stouter arm. Hence, the higher the intelligence of the tribe, the more deadly and widespread became the carnage. Ferocity became a useful social quality—a virtue, indeed, the supreme virtue, or *virtus* (manliness)—and the primitive genius was expended in making more cruel and lacerating the barbs of the arrow and the spear. The administration of justice advanced, and a time came when private vengeance, and even family feuds, were strictly forbidden and regarded as crimes. But, while ten men might not go to war against ten men, ten thousand would march out, with the sonorous blessing of their priests, to the more barbaric butchery of war against ten thousand. The mind had to grow larger, the heart more human, before the reign of justice would be acknowledged in the relations of masses of men to each other as well as in the relations of individuals.

With the dawn of civilisation a terrible paradox occurred. Warfare was not abolished, but made more destructive. Again we find this a natural and intelligible development. Each early civilisation found itself surrounded by barbaric tribes, with which no compact of justice could be established or trusted. The great Stoic humanitarians of

Rome, who preached the brotherhood of men and denounced violence, dared not, in the interest of civilisation, plead disarmament. There were, of course, moral sophisms in support of this plain need. The profit of aggression, the prestige of conquering, were adorned with phrases akin to our "white man's burden." Yet it is true that until modern times warfare could not have been abolished without grave danger to civilisation. The crime of warfare became a crime only in these later centuries. Now that fully three-fourths of the race are gathered into civilised states, a compact of justice, an international tribunal with an international executive, *is possible*; and we are guilty, either of a base hypocrisy or a ghastly insensibility to our gravest interests, in refusing to set up that compulsory international tribunal.

No writer will be expected to discuss patiently to-day the pitiful sophistry with which, until yesterday, a few defended the retention of the military institution. Germany resounded with, and England and France and the United States echoed here and there, the pompous and hollow claims of its Treitschkes and Moltkes. War was a splendid moral discipline: an institution appointed by Providence for purging the race of sloth and materialism, for restoring chivalry and brightening the shield of honour and rebuking selfishness. War has grimly belied its apologists and we need notice them no longer. It has betrayed one of the greatest nations of modern times

into horrors and outrages which are a supreme and eternal mockery of their moral claims for it.

Others more justly claimed that war develops the virility, the endurance, the power of men. The lesson of history, they said, is on the side of war : the great empires of the world became great by their heroism and sacrifices on the field of battle. Here we must distinguish carefully. It is obviously true that these empires became big, powerful, and wealthy by war ; and if any nation candidly confesses that it relies on war to increase its territory, its power, and its wealth, its argument is unanswerable. But there is now no nation in the world that professes to maintain an army and a navy for the purpose of aggression and expansion. Even Germany, which undoubtedly did construct its massive armament for that purpose, had not the audacity to admit it. Defence is the justifying title and, in so far as it is sincere, it is a just title. If, as long as the military system lasts, an army and a navy of a certain strength are required, in the judgment of appointed experts, for the defence of a country and its institutions, we pay our share willingly for the maintenance of such an army and navy, and we respect our soldiers and sailors. I do not for one moment advocate the disarmament of one nation living amidst armed neighbours ; and a partial disarmament, or an insufficient armament, is the surest provocation of war. My point is that, since the world has reached such a pitch of moral development that each nation now professes

to arm only against the possible aggression of a neighbour, the time has come for them to agree upon the infinitely less costly and more reliable way of settling their possible quarrels as individuals do. Only one nation, Germany, seems to be genuinely opposed to this, not so much from native malice of character as from very serious domestic reasons for aggression: and a perfect opportunity now arises for effectively impressing on Germany the fact that she has come too late into the family of Great Powers for filibustering.

As to the development of physique and endurance and discipline, it is too obvious that this could be attained by athletic contests which are at present left to voluntary interest or to the unattractive manoeuvres of professional exploiters. For years I have followed professional football with keen pleasure, and I was interested when, at the outbreak of war, men cried that these footballers were the most superb material for our recruiting agents. It was perfectly true. Any State which is sincerely eager to develop the physique and endurance of its citizens can do it by the use of devices which will provide most enjoyable spectacles and national or international festivals instead of periodic orgies of blood and tears. The defenders of war must be hard pressed for argument when they plead this necessity. There is, moreover, one supreme difference between war and athletics as instruments of training. War destroys what it creates: athletics keeps its men among our citizens and breeders.

The truth is that the whole historical argument for war, which has had an incalculable influence in the education of Germany, is a miserable fallacy. The real lesson of history is that militarism has been a malignant cancer, transmitted from one empire to another, and, by destroying them, it has hundreds of times suspended the advance of civilisation. It is in a sense a fallacy to claim that any nation became great by war. The tribe which wins ascendancy over its neighbours does so because it is already more powerful, more numerous, or more fortunately situated. Then comes the period of expansion, when, as we admit, greater power and wealth and territory are undoubtedly won by the sword. This is the seductive phase of history, leading astray men like Ruskin as well as men like Mommsen and Niebuhr. Let us admit all its glories. Moral and humanitarian excesses are just as mischievous as immoral excesses. As a result of this successful war and expansion, the older empires were enabled to foster art, to protect their growing culture, to civilise vast stretches of the earth that might otherwise have lain uncivilised for ages.

Most assuredly war has, in this sense, been a most valuable influence in spreading civilisation over the earth. What modern historians forget is that the conditions have totally changed. Your empire is no longer surrounded by myriads of barbarians whom you must conquer before you can civilise. Germany has been forced to colour its aggression by the stupid pretence that it had a

higher *Kultur* than its neighbours, and that, in endeavouring to impose it on them, it was carrying out the "law of history." It is a pity that science and history ever adopted the word "law." What they mean, of course, is only a summary of the way in which things uniformly occurred in certain conditions. Now that the conditions are entirely changed, the laws have no application. One might suggest that we still need armies to conquer and civilise the outstanding barbaric peoples. We do not. We need an international armed force to check their aggressions, but there are other and better methods of civilising them. In any case, this plea has no relation to the vast armies and navies and the bloody wars we actually endure.

But it is the next and final phase of militarism which the historical apologists for war have so grossly overlooked : the phase when the best stocks of the old race are extinguished on the battlefield or enervated by the luxurious idleness which was bought by the spoils of war. Is it not proverbial how the great families which had led the invincible legions of Rome dwindled in five centuries into a sickly cluster of parasites or wholly disappeared ? Is it not notorious that it was, in the first century of the present era, the healthier provincial stocks which saved Rome from destruction, or postponed its destruction ? And do we not find, as time goes on, men from more and more distant provinces, in the end men from the barbaric fringes of the Empire, coming to lead its legions and support its

falling eagles? All through Roman history war presents itself to the mind of the candid historian as a vampire living on the best blood of the people. Only a continuous supply of fresh blood and stout frames from the subject peoples keeps up the illusion of an "eternal Rome." It is only the shell that lasts. The people of Rome itself and of the neighbouring plains, from which the old legionaries had come, were soon exhausted. Italy in turn was exhausted and made desolate. Then Gaul and Spain and Africa, and Thrace and Dacia and the more distant provinces, were sucked bloodless and resourceless; and the great shell of an empire fell with a crash under the blows of Goth and Vandal. It is a clerical myth that Roman strength was sapped by vice. Its blood was drunk by war.

These things Niebuhr and Mommsen forgot when they proposed to Germany the splendid example of Rome; and history will have its revenge on its great interpreters by recording the close in tragedy of this new imperialism which they inspired. Other historians boldly quoted Greece—Alexander of Macedon—and the fallacy is even more piteous. Athens assuredly did not become great by war. Its most brilliant period opens after a crushing and devastating reverse, and its achievements were entirely due to its statesmen, its artists, and its thinkers. But from the moment when the shadow of the Macedonian empire fell on it, a blight came swiftly over its culture. Its glory departed for ever when it became part of a great military

power. Greece, as a whole, was impoverished and ruined by war. Sparta itself, one of the most strenuous military powers that ever lived, is a classical proof that war invigorates only to destroy.

To whatever nation we turn, we learn the same lesson of history. Egypt survived the strain, owing to the constant infusion of foreign blood, for eight thousand years, but sank at last so exhausted that it seems almost beyond the hope of reanimation. Assyria and Babylonia were prepared for destruction by the same steady drain of their healthiest blood. The Hittites, the Lydians, the Phœnicians, the Medes, the Persians followed the same course. From the first founding of civilisation in the valley of the Nile, ten thousand years ago, war has brooded over its cities and cornfields, and has time after time blighted its achievements and its hopes. It is as though some god were jealous of the advance of man, and maintained on the earth this corroding pest to eat into the life of each successive empire, and, by destroying it, to interrupt the progress of the race.

In the history of Europe since the fall of Rome we witness the same human tragedy. I do not overlook the other evil influences, such as fiscal disorder and industrial parasitism, which have contributed to the fall of empires, but the share of war in these tragedies was incalculable. The fate of early England, battling against invaders and rent by internal quarrels for centuries, is typical. The greater England of modern times, or the *real*

greatness of modern England, was built in periods of comparative peace by merchants and manufacturers and scholars. Over the whole of Europe the vampire still brooded, fastening on each young nation that advanced beyond its fellows. The medieval republics of Italy were wrecked by war. Holland and Portugal, once the most promising powers of Europe, were exhausted by it. Not vice, not enervation, not a dwindling birth-rate,—which are rather consequences than causes,—but the incessant exhaustion of their resources on the seas and the battlefield condemned them to decay. Italy fell back into the state of impotence which gave Austria and the Papacy their ignoble opportunity. Once more the advance of civilisation was checked by the jealous god of war.

It is, of course, true that warfare produced fine types of men ; but for every Bayard there were ten thousand brutal soldiers, whose march across Europe left a broad track of rape and ruin. It is true that the naval or military successes of Venice and Genoa and Florence enabled them to raise marble palaces and to foster the art of painters and the research of scholars ; but it is equally true that prosperity based on such a foundation was generally doomed. The example of medieval Rome shows that a military basis was not essential. The peoples from whom the tribute had been wrung awaited their hour—the hour when the vampire had sucked the great frame weak and bloodless—and then, by the same law of might, they smote the oppressor.

The historian who reads the whole chronicle of man is saddened even in contemplating a nation's prosperity. Amidst the cries of joy and triumph and love he seems to hear the cynical laughter of the war-god.

I need not follow the devastation of war through the later history of Europe. The Thirty Years War laid Germany desolate, and postponed its cultural development for more than a century. Spain, Portugal, and Holland, which had won empire by the sword, lost it to the sword. The Ottoman Empire sank into weakness and shame. All this was due, in the first place, to what Count von Moltke calls "the institution of God": the institution without which "the world would fall into decay and lose itself in materialism." Even while he spoke Germany was prospering by peace as few nations had ever prospered before. Could there possibly be a more perverse reading of the lesson of history? Could there be a greater mockery conceived than to imagine God smiling on this blood-reeking Europe, or to call this a spiritual triumph over materialism? Is any man, with the present desolation of Europe before him, tempted to place the soldier above the artist, the scientist, or the engineer as an instrument of progress? Let us grant militarism all that it has really achieved. It remains, in the mind of the historian, the greatest curse that mankind has endured since the primitive humans were first gathered into tribes and disputed each other's "spheres of influence."

Blind to this ghastly tragedy of history, we have maintained and cherished militarism until it has brought on us in turn the greatest catastrophe that a single year ever embraced. Probably our grandchildren, probably many a child that gazes now with wide eyes on our troops and banners, will look back on our civilisation with amazement. They may smile at a drill-sergeant like Count von Moltke telling illiterate rustics of the glorious moral qualities which war develops in—the men who traversed Belgium! But we civilians will honestly puzzle them. We had the history of the world unfolded before us, and we saw this institution plainly emerging from barbarism and leaving its bloody and defacing splashes on every page of the chronicle. We traced the evolution of justice, and we saw that, as it was a mighty gain to men when tribunals were set up to adjudicate on the quarrels of individuals or clans, it would be a far mightier gain to erect a tribunal for settling the quarrels of nations. Yet we took this stupid burden from the shoulders of our fathers, and we made it incalculably heavier for ourselves and our children.

I need not set out the weight of the burden in figures. When I first wrote this page I dilated on the seventy million sterling per year which we English were compelled to spend on defence: I imagined it expended on social betterment and human help—on a magnificent scheme of education, for children and adults, and so on. Then I observed—two years ago—with a shudder that at

any moment a war might double our National Debt and compel us to find a further £40,000,000 a year to pay for our militarism. And here, within less than twelve months, we have incurred this monstrous burden, yet we linger still on the very fringe of the mighty battlefield we have to traverse. Think what the future may be if we retain militarism. In the past one hundred years, or a little more, war has cost Europe about £4,000,000,000. In one year a modern war has cost Europe more than that sum, and may cost it double. Add to this, if you can calculate it, the value of the millions of the more robust workers who die on the field : the appalling loss to productive industry : the portentous devastation of property. I suppose that, soberly, the total cost of this war will be something between ten and twenty thousand million sterling. What will be the cost of the next war, which may come within ten years ? And what might we have done in Europe with ten thousand million sterling ?

I am not, it will be observed, relying on disputed speculations like those of Mr. Norman Angell. I do not accept his characteristic theory ; but it need not now be discussed, as our experience rather suggests that a modern war will prove so exhausting, economically, that there will be no question of substantial indemnity for the victor. But we must in any case add to this cost of war, for victor and vanquished alike, that incalculable damage which is expressed in ruined homes, ruined fortunes,

and the pain of loss. This also is too vividly present in our minds to need comment. These sacrifices have been borne heroically. Those of us who have lost nothing can most sincerely salute both the men who exposed their lives in a just cause and the women who endured as women do. The soldier's trade is an honourable trade while the need for it lasts, and at such a time it calls for respect and gratitude. But how stupid and brutal in the last degree is the system that imposes these sacrifices, when we reflect that the honour or the rights of any nation could have been vindicated without the darkening of a single home or the loss of a single citizen.

There, of course, we have the centre of gravity of the whole discussion. *If* we can abolish and dispense with the military system, our retention of it in the twentieth century is the most appalling sham and anachronism of which we are guilty. I do not enlarge on the cost of war. No one to-day can be insensible of it or suggest that any but the most imperious needs would justify us in retaining it. I assume also that, after the lamentable behaviour of Germany, none will question that there will be wars as long as militarism lasts, and that the cost and carnage will increase prodigiously.

The supreme point for us to realise is the comparative ease with which this greatest of reforms can be accomplished. We have no rival schools of economists or moralists or philosophers darkening counsel here. We do not await a genius to discover

the path for us. A plain and seriously indisputable ideal is put before us: arbitration. A court for exercising it has already been established: the Hague Tribunal. Let the majority of people in the more powerful nations of the earth agree to submit every international difference to that or some other tribunal, and we have made an end of militarism and war.

If this seem a hasty or superficial view of a grave problem, reflect on the difficulties which a cautious or conservative thinker might allege. He would, I fancy, on sincere consideration, admit that the chief and most serious difficulty is not a reluctance based on specific reasons, but a general apathy due to want of reflection. I am not for a moment underrating the magnitude of the effort that will be required in overcoming this apathy, in creating the general will. In this respect, indeed, the pacifist reform is peculiarly hampered. Pessimistic people ask how we came to boast of moral progress in modern times when this military evil has become greater than ever. They do not reflect on the special conditions of the problem. In attacking almost every other evil—industrial injustice, say, or cruel sport, or a stupid penal code—we have to deal only with our own nation. We can carry the reform within our own frontiers, whatever other nations do. In the case of militarism we cannot. All the Great Powers, at least, must advance simultaneously. We have not to educate a nation, but a planet. Pacifists have at times given

the impression—generally a wrong impression—that they forgot this; that they advocated disarmament or relaxation of armament in our own nation, whether other nations disarmed or no. In this way, and because many pacifists have weakly opposed or carped at England's action in this very grave crisis, they have done harm by making humanitarianism seem unpractical, blindly sentimental, and dangerous. I need not repeat that I have not the least sympathy with that sort of pacifism. The reform must be international and thoroughly practical.

But this large task of planting a definite conviction in the minds of the majority in many nations does not conflict with what I said about the essential clearness and simplicity of the reform. If you set out to attack poverty or to reform marriage, you have first to settle very serious controversies about the way to do it. There is no such controversy here. There are, it is true, a few who still have in their veins some of the blood of the medieval swashbuckler. They say that, while a quarrel about territory might fitly be referred to a judge, an outrage on our national honour must be expiated by blood. The idea is purely barbaric. As if this river of human blood were not an immeasurably greater outrage than the heated words of a nervous diplomatist, or the jibes of a silly journalist, or the acts of an excited crowd, or the guilt of a couple of assassins! As if an international court could not devise some means of appeasing injured honour

as well as of restoring injured rights ! It is dreadful materialism, they say, to put honour in the scale with money. So men said in the clubs of London a century ago in defence of the duel, and we recognise in their pleas the lingering, more or less disguised, of a barbaric sentiment. Most of us recognise that same feature in this last apology for the duel of nations. If we can trust our individual honour to a mediocre magistrate or judge, or a still worse jury, we can certainly entrust our national honour to a group of the ablest and most impartial lawyers of the world. It is sheer distrust of justice to refuse it.

Here again history is wholly on the side of reform. Which of the great wars of the nineteenth century involved a point of honour that could not, with entire decency, have been submitted to arbitration ? Was there such a point of honour in the Napoleonic wars ? The Prusso-Danish ? The Prusso-Austrian ? The Italian ? The American Civil War ? The Franco-German ? The Russo-Turkish ? The South African ? What point was involved in any of them that could not have been settled with far greater honour to the combatants and greater regard for justice by an impartial tribunal ? In most cases they were really wars of aggression and expansion, like the war in which we are engaged. We may at least ask the men who hold that medieval idea of war to have—since they boast much of their courage—the elementary courage to say so.

There is no conceivable quarrel that cannot with

perfect honour be submitted to arbitration. And the ostensible ground of this colossal struggle which is now exhausting Europe—the satisfaction due to Austria for the assassination of the Archduke—was pre-eminently a matter for a tribunal. The frivolity and insincerity with which these grave issues are sometimes met are, to put it on the lowest level, costly. Speaking in a London club some time ago, I urged this substitution of arbitration for war. My opponent frivolously observed that he was not sure that a court of great lawyers would be cheaper than war, and there were some who quite seriously applauded. Yet Europe had then actually expended about £2,000,000,000 in the preliminary stages of its great war !

Wherever there is a considerable and deliberate reluctance to substitute arbitration for war, wherever these unsatisfactory pleas for war are put forward, we find a hypocritical concealment of real motives. If we would be practical we must candidly confront these motives, and we shall find that the most persistent and most dangerous of them is still the desire to gain territory. The spectacle of the decay of the Ottoman Empire and the apparent helplessness of the Balkan peoples had more to do with the militarism of European Powers than they were willing to admit. That source of temptation is now renewed, and most of the Powers have, or soon will have, all the territory they can reasonably desire. The further distribution of African territory could clearly be best controlled by an international

court. There remains one Power that will still feel the lust of territory. Germany conspicuously thwarted in Europe the advance of the pacifist reform because, as the whole world now sees, it had an aggressive territorial ambition. We may assume that Austria will now be cured of its lawless and costly designs, and that Germany will remain the one unsated and discontented nation. But Europe will surely have the elementary wisdom of refusing to maintain its terrible burden on that account. It will pay us better to meet the real economic need of Germany by a generous colonial deal, and then to use the power of an international polity to destroy and prevent the revival of militarism in that country.

We should thus remove the last serious obstacle to the reform, and the work might advance rapidly. The tribunal, as I said, exists, and has had more experience than is generally realised. The Hague Conference of 1907 established a Prize Court, with permanent salaried judges, and an Arbitration Court. A large number of very grave quarrels have since been adjusted by this tribunal, and, as Professor Schücking observes, "more than a hundred contracts between States have been concluded in which, on each occasion, two States made the Arbitration Court obligatory." But, largely owing to the opposition of Germany and the general apathy, the Court remained optional, and the Powers maintained their armies for the settlement of quarrels in the old barbaric manner. The

next and last step is for all the Powers to recognise the Court as compulsory, and to furnish it with an executive (a small international army and navy) for the enforcement of its decisions. Our vast armies and navies then become superfluous and would be disbanded simultaneously, leaving only a small force in each country for the suppression of native aggression (with the consent of the Hague Court) and for use by the Court itself to enforce its verdicts or suppress illegal attempts to arm.

There is nothing utopian or academic about this reform. A body of high-minded lawyers and statesmen have for years discussed the details of the scheme, and are ready to launch it whenever the various Governments are compelled by public opinion to adopt it. The immediate task is to create this pressure of public opinion. We may hope that, after our ghastly lesson in the price of the military method, we shall no longer be rebuffed with vapid phrases like : " Do not force the pace." A business-man who talked nonsense of that kind would soon find his level. We need to conduct our national and international life on business-principles, to get rid as speedily as possible of a waste and disorder which are an outrage on the intelligence of the race. I look more confidently to business-men than to speech-making politicians and sentimental moralists for the triumph of the reform. Certain industries will, of course, be gravely dislocated, even annihilated, by the change ; and vast bodies of additional workers will, in most

countries, be thrown upon a crowded labour-market. From the abstract economical point of view it is only a question of transfer. Fifty millions which were spent on military industries will now be used in enlarging other industries or creating new. In reality there will be grave confusion; but that is due to the utterly disorganised nature of our industrial world, which I discuss later. In any case to allege this industrial difficulty as a serious reason against disarmament is a very singular piece of folly. The cost and trouble of adjusting this temporary dislocation would be infinitely less than the cost and trouble of a war.

We need, therefore, to persuade the public, which has borne its military yoke and endured the occasional lash of war with the placidity of a draught-ox—that is, candidly, how we shall appear in the social history of the future—that it may escape the yoke and the lash when it wills. Our Churches might make some atonement for a long and lamentable neglect of their duty by organising a really spirited collective campaign in this greatest of moral interests. The central educative body should, however, be quite unsectarian. I take it that an amalgamation of the various Peace Societies, strengthened by the adhesion of our commercial and industrial leaders, would form this central educative body. The present war would furnish it with a superb text and an unanswerable argument. It ought, in the circumstances, to capture each country in Europe more speedily than Cobden's

famous league captured England. The press would begin to assist at a certain stage of progress. Even the politicians would presently lend their oratory ; especially as their prestige, at least in this country, would hardly survive a second strain such as this war has put on it. Every agency ought to be enlisted in impressing upon the public that, whatever other reforms may imply, here we ask no sacrifice ; we indicate a way in which the community may, when it wills, rid itself of a stupendous burden and set free enormous resources for social improvement.

Reformers are widely, and with some reason, accused of being dreamy and unpractical. Here, at least, it will be seen that it is rather the public and the opponents of reform who are dreamy, romantic, and unpractical : that the reform itself is a business proposition of the most attractive and promising character. But let us be even more practical. To forecast the future is an interesting intellectual recreation ; but to close one's mind entirely against the possibilities and dangers of the future is positive folly. Let us glance at the future.

I have not the faintest hope that the Allied Powers will, as they ought to do, disarm Germany and Austria and then disarm themselves, when the war is over. Then Germany will concentrate all its marvellous power of organisation, dissimulation, and intrigue in a dream of *revanche*. The appalling incompetence displayed by what we may call, in the broadest sense, our Intelligence Department and our War Office will return, when the temporary

accession of business-ability has been withdrawn from it. There will be no serious inquiry into our scandalous indolence in the early period of the war, our complete failure to forecast the conditions of war, and our heavy somnolence during Germany's feverish preparations, although the documents published by the French Government show that, by 1913 at least, sharp-sighted foreign representatives saw clearly that war was, to put it moderately, highly probable. In point of fact, our authorities knew that war was gravely imminent. I happen to know, from a little breach of confidence, that our War Office secretly warned certain reservists in June 1914 (even before the Serajevo murder) to be ready. The men were ready, and have borne *their* share superbly; but our authorities had to confess that, even after nine months' experience of the war, they were immeasurably behind Germany in the production of the two vital necessities of a modern war—machine-guns and high-explosive shells.

Our experts will return to this comfortable somnolence. There will be no serious inquiry. Politicians and their advisers will escape in a cloud of thrilling emotions and enthusiastic rhetoric. Persistent questioners, who are rudely impatient of party-discipline, will be snubbed and evaded. Any other questioners, not of the political world, will be ignored. We shall return to British dignity and placidity. Germany will work and intrigue as it never worked and intrigued before. There

will be grave domestic trouble in Russia and, as in the case of Turkey, German representatives will think while British representatives play. The preparations may occupy ten years or twenty years, but they will proceed. The aim will be a war with Russia neutral or friendly to Germany. If it occurs . . . One has only to imagine where we should be to-day if Germany had not made the error of abandoning the Bismarckian tradition.

Behind this is a further possibility. China is just as capable as Japan of learning the use of thirteen-inch guns and maxims. Sir Hiram Maxim, in fact, who knows both China and the gun, quite agrees with me on that. And China has, behind that stoical and almost child-like expression it presents to Europe, an acute memory that for thirty years we have treated it with flagrant injustice. It may take decades to undo the evil of ages of Manchu misgovernment and organise the resources of the country, but the day will come when an alert and powerful nation of 500,000,000 Orientals will press against its frontiers. We may remember that the Mongol banners have before now fluttered over Moscow and reached the Mediterranean. And the Mongols are not the only awakening people. We may yet see an anti-European combination from the Asiatic shore of the Pacific to the African shore of the Atlantic. These are some of the possibilities we hand on to our children if we do not in time abandon the military system.

To that pass has it brought us. We writhe and groan under the terrible burden it lays on us, and we shrink from contemplating the future ; yet we might cast off the burden and rid the future of peril when we will. We disavow the buccaneering spirit, and protest that we arm only in defence against each other ; and one wonders whether to smile or weep at the obtuseness which prevents us from adopting a simple and humane means of defence instead of this exhausting barbarism. We “humanise” war, yet cling needlessly to the whole inhuman business. We are teaching the backward nations to arm,—we would gladly supply them with tutors and arms at any time,—and may be thus preparing a more colossal conflict than ever. Surely the man or woman of the twenty-first century will find us an enigma !

Let me close with a repetition of my protest against the misconstruction to which such a book as this is always exposed. I advocate no utopian scheme, but one which some of the ablest lawyers, statesmen, and business-men in Europe have discussed for years and warmly endorsed. I have no wish to conceal technical difficulties under sentimental phrases, but these men, to whom I refer, are prepared to meet the difficulties. I regard the work of the soldier as honourable and worthy, as long as we impose the military system on each other ; and at this particular juncture regret only that I am long past the age of bearing arms. I plead, as long as the system lasts, for unquestionable

efficiency in national defence, whatever it cost. But I say that, in this military system, we are enthroning the hollowest and most ghastly sham that ever deluded humanity : that, when we have the courage or wisdom to strip it of its tinselled robes, we will shudder at sight of the gaunt frame of death which has ruled civilisation for so many thousand years : that nothing is wanting but the general will to dethrone this mockery of a god : and that, when we have abolished militarism and war, we shall advance along the way of social improvement with far lighter steps and vastly increased resources.

CHAPTER III

THE FOLLIES OF SHAM PATRIOTISM

WHEN warfare is abolished, and men no longer peep at their foreign neighbours over hedges of bayonets, there will be a number of less important international absurdities to remove. Some three hundred years ago, we discovered that the earth was a globe. To-day we are appreciating that this globe is the property of the human race, and that the friendly co-operation of all branches of the race is extremely desirable. National efforts and sacrifices are undone by international waste and disorder. We begin to perceive this, and the most sober of us must look forward to a time when the scattered and antagonistic elements of the race will agree upon some graceful design of a City of Man, and unite in constructing it.

That familiar phrase, the Brotherhood of Men, sounds rather hollow in the ears of many. I am avoiding pretty phrases and disputable creeds and subtle philosophies—I am trying to keep in direct contact with the realities of life—and therefore I do not use it. But the sincere sentiment behind it, the feeling that we men and women do form one

large family in possession of an immense and infinitely fertile estate, and that we will develop our property more advantageously for each of us if we act as though we were brothers, can hardly be challenged. The question of the exact expression of our relationship to each other may be left to poets and scientists.

Those lighter shams of patriotism, which I shall describe in this chapter as hampering the march of the race, will be recognised even by men who, with Carlyle or Nietzsche, refuse the title of brother to some of their fellows. We ourselves smile at them sometimes, and at the cheerfulness with which we endure the grave inconvenience they put on us ; and they will certainly provoke the laughter of the scholars who will some day learnedly discuss the question whether we men and women of the twentieth century were or were not civilised. They have, it is true, a much more serious aspect ; they are important auxiliaries of the war-god. On the whole, however, they are shams that we ought to kill with ridicule and bury with genial disdain. They are practices or institutions which we have plainly inherited from the barbaric past, when men were slaves of tradition, kingly or priestly, and dare hardly use their own intelligence on their own habits. In this age of ours, when we are at last becoming the masters, instead of the slaves, of our traditions, they are regarded by large bodies of men and women in every civilised country as stupid, anachronistic, and mischievous.

In fact, there is here again no serious difference of opinion. One has not to force one's way through some controversial thicket before one can discover the correct path of reform. The way lies perfectly clear before us, and we can enter it at any time when we have the collective will to do so. One might again describe the proposal, not as a "reform"—since many people instinctively shrink from the word reform—but as a business-proposition of the simplest and most profitable character. I speak of those false and antiquated freaks of patriotism which keep different groups of human beings speaking different languages, using different weights and measures, wrestling with each other's mysterious coinage, collecting each other's stamps, and stumbling against the many other irritating diversities which make one part of the earth "foreign" to another. It may seem to imply some lack of sense of proportion to pass from so grave a subject as war to these matters, but a very little reflection will show how closely they are connected.

The first and most ludicrous of them is the stubbornness with which each fragment of the race prides itself on having a language of its own. This confusion of tongues has irritated and inconvenienced and helped to exasperate against each other the various sections of the human community for thousands of years, although we could suppress it at will in half a generation. Millions of us have an acute and constant experience of the absurdity of the system. In our schools, where mind and

body require the fullest possible attention during the few years of training, we devote a large proportion of the time to teaching children how the same idea may be expressed by half a dozen different sounds. The higher the class of school, the more valuable and skilled the teacher, the more time must be wasted in learning how ancient Greeks and Romans, or how Germans and French and Italians, have invented different sounds from ours for expressing the same ideas. The slenderness of the protest one hears against this polyglot system from educators themselves is amazing. They have, it is true, begun to rebel in large numbers against the teaching of dead languages, but comparatively few of them support the increasing demand for that adoption of a common tongue which would do so much for the advance of education.

Those whose parents did not happen to be wealthy enough in their youth to send them to schools which have the distinction of teaching "languages" are hampered in a hundred ways. If they travel, they must pay sycophantic waiters and couriers to give them a dim understanding of the human world through which they pass. Even in their own country they cannot order a dinner at any well-ordered restaurant without first studying a lengthy vocabulary of superfluous sounds, or without practising a dozen little hypocrisies to conceal their ignorance. In large colonial hotels, where hardly a single person who does not speak English is ever found, one receives a "menu" with the usual intimidating

array of French phrases. "You ought to supply dictionaries with this sort of thing!" said an angry young squatter, taking a seat beside me in the Grand Hotel at Melbourne, to the waiter. If you are travelling for business, or even transacting business at home, you must have your foreign correspondents and agents; and with their aid you follow dimly the very interesting advances and experiments that are being made in your department abroad. Our Governments must pay more heavily for diplomatic and consular service. Our books and magazines make a parade of foreign phrases which have not yet become as familiar as English. Our shopkeepers add twenty-five per cent. to the cost of our linen by calling it "lingerie." . . .

We are tormented in a hundred ways, yet we contemplate this absurd muddle and waste with as resigned an air as if we still believed that the Almighty had, in a fit of temper, created the confusion of tongues at ancient Babel. So subtle and strong is the hold of custom on us that we rarely even ask ourselves whether this is a wise or an unalterable arrangement. We hear with indifference, if not with amusement, of societies which propose to adopt one international tongue in the place of this ridiculous confusion; we languidly picture to ourselves little groups of long-haired faddists meeting in bleak halls to attract our duller neighbours to the cultivation of one more innocent enthusiasm. We have not time for these things. When a sensible man has given adequate time

to business and pleasure, he has, he says, no hours to spare for these idealistic luxuries. Yet a moment's serious reflection would show us that the sole aim of these "faddists" is to make life *less* crowded and laborious, to lighten our business and add to our pleasure, to introduce common-sense into a large part of our conduct. To such strange contradictions and absurdities does this resolve to resist innovation bring us.

Most people are, perhaps,—if they ever give a thought to the matter,—under the impression that it is a mountainous and impracticable task to introduce such a reform into the life of the world. It is, on the contrary, one of the simplest and most practicable reforms to which men could set their hands. It is even less controversial a measure than the abolition of war. There are few prejudices of our time which have not attracted the ingenuity of some faddist or other; but this is one of the few. More emphatically here than in the case of war, all that we need is the will of the majority to change our anachronistic practice. When one regards the entirely uncontroversial nature of the reform and the immense economy it will entail, it is hardly unreasonable to hope that this will of the majority may soon be secured.

I assume that, when we agree to direct our "Governments" to carry out this elementary improvement of international life, they will summon an international commission of philologists, educators, and commercial men, whose business it will be to

create a new language. This step will not be taken until the voluntary movement for reform has reached such proportions as to arouse the interest of politicians; but in the end we rely on governmental action, as it is necessary to reform schools and Parliaments. This international commission will, no doubt, examine impartially such languages as Esperanto. Possibly these existing international tongues will be found more complex than an ideal language ought to be, and less attentive to the finer values of speech. For the simple purpose of expression it is possible to create a tongue far less complex than any in use in the civilised world to-day: a tongue that could be learned in a few months even by the untrained intelligence. It would proceed on the entirely opposite principle to that of modern word-makers: the principle, for instance, that changes "fireworks" into "pyrotechnics" (a piece of bad Greek for good English), or "gardening" into "horticulture." The use of this debased Latin and Greek in science has a certain advantage under our present polyglot system, as it is an approach toward international agreement, but it is making more onerous than ever the burden of our languages. We want a simple means of expression and intercourse, with a power of expanding to meet the advance of thought and discovery without needing to run to such lengths as "diaminotrihydroxydodecanoic acid." No existing national speech would meet the purpose, least of all English; but it would be advisable to have

some regard to æsthetic interests in framing a new language, and the old tongues would supply a good deal of material in this regard. The success of the poet depends on qualities of words as well as qualities of imagination, and we have no wish, like Plato, to exclude poets from the ideal commonwealth. We should retain large numbers of these short expressive words.

Great numbers of people hesitate in face of this proposal because they feel that it is a very large innovation, however simple and indisputable it is in principle. They contemplate such things as a nervous child gazes on the sea from the steps of a bathing machine. Intellectually, a few such plunges would be of incalculable service to our generation. One can understand people hesitating before some disputed economic or political scheme, but to shrink from adopting plain and large reforms such as this is not a sign of health. We need to purge our sluggish imaginations of their prejudices, to brace our intellectual power, to take pride in our creativeness.

When the new international tongue is ready, a few years will suffice to make it prevail over the older languages in the leading countries which helped to set up the commission. It will become the one speech of the school, the press, commerce, law, government, and, possibly, the church. The travelling public will, as every Esperantist knows, at once discover the advantage. The commercial world will find it a splendid economy and a priceless

boon to international trade. A man will be able to travel from London to Tokyo with as little difficulty as from Woolwich to Ealing ; and it will be found that when the foreign tongue, which so instinctively suggests to us the uniform of an enemy, has disappeared, one of the worst obstacles to mutual good-feeling will be removed. When the Englishman can talk to the Berliner with perfect ease,—I assume that all beginnings of dialect would be suppressed as mercilessly as weeds in a well-kept garden,—just as a citizen of London now talks with a citizen of New York or Sydney, a very dangerous chasm will be bridged. It is quite certain that the calamitous attitude of modern Germany could not have proceeded to such a dangerous pitch if the Imperialist and other literature which is responsible for it had been intelligible to the whole of Europe. A few students of particular aspects of German life were more or less acquainted with it, and we refused to believe them. Now we discover, to our amazement, that a neighbouring nation has for decades been openly educated up to a pitch of unscrupulous aggression, and the world has been threatened with an incalculable catastrophe. I am not overlooking the real reasons for this development, but I say confidently that it would have been impossible if a national literature were not generally confined within the nation which produces it.

In the school the advantage would be very considerable. Our overstrained and bespectacled

children would be spared several hours a day of their school-work or home-work. The whole ancient and modern-language section of the curriculum would be suppressed, and this suppression, with other reforms which I will describe later, would enlarge the teacher's opportunity of giving real education and spare the pupil a great deal of devastating brain-fag. For the education of older people the gain would be almost as great. A Birmingham artisan could read the latest novel of d'Annunzio or latest play of Hauptmann without the assistance of expert or inexpert translators. All the older literature that is worth preserving would be translated by specially qualified interpreters into the new tongue, and the originals would then become the toys of leisured pedants. If, as I suggested, a proper attention to word-values were secured in the making of the new tongue, there is no reason why it should not express poetical sentiments as gracefully and pleasantly as any existing tongue.

Is there any utopian element in this scheme? Most people will probably recognise that the only bit of utopianism in it is the expectation that the majority of any nation can be induced to adopt it. That might seem to justify one in using impatient language about the wisdom of the majority of us, but it is no reflection on the scheme itself. The reformer, however, is ill-advised in reflecting on the intelligence of his fellows. Carlyle's "twenty-seven millions, mostly fools," discovered in the end

that all their follies, which he so vigorously denounced in his *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, were more permanent and accurate than his "eternal verities." It is usually want of leisure or immediate profit which alienates the public from schemes of reform. Possibly a scheme which so plainly promises more leisure to us and a very considerable profit may hope to win attention. The reform of spelling I, of course, take as an integral part of the scheme.

But this reform of international intercourse must take a more comprehensive shape than the mere suppression of this confusing plurality of tongues. It is just as foolish of us to maintain a plurality of weights and measures, of coinage and postage-stamps, of social and civic and juridical forms. Even if we confine our attention to the leading civilised nations, we find in these respects a confusion which outrages the elementary instincts of commercial life and lays a monstrous burden of superfluous trouble on us all. Travellers and business-men endure it year after year with the most amazing patience. Men who would be fired to instant action if they found a trace of such disorder in their domestic or commercial concerns resign themselves to this colossal muddle of international intercourse as calmly as if it were a providential and entirely sacred arrangement. I remember once passing rather rapidly from Lucerne to London, by way of Wiesbaden, Cologne, and Brussels: on another occasion by way of Cologne and Amsterdam. The hours one has to spend in calculating

coinage (or lose the exchange-value), the worry expended in struggling for stamps or dinners in the less familiar tongues, the confusion of train-rules and street-usages and civic regulations, reflect a system of chaotic disorder ; to say nothing of the " sizes " of boots or collars you need, the weight of tobacco or fruit, and so on.

All this is a portentous example of slavery to tradition, whether the tradition be reasonable or no. We have not the slightest regard for the historical development of this muddle and the peculiar folly of retaining it in our generation. Our earlier ancestors measured their woollens or their corn or their mead by the simple standards that are apt to occur to primitive peoples. Even, however, where the same standard occurred to, or commended itself to, different and remote communities, its vagueness was fatal. " A thousand paces " (*a mille*, as the Romans said) seemed a fair reckoning for long distances, but the stretch varied, and we have Irish miles and German miles and English miles and nautical miles. Our ounces and yards and pints are as intelligent as most of the other things which the ancient Briton invented, but, being British, they seem sacred to us. A hundred years ago a far superior standard, the decimal system, was put before us, but our fathers felt that it smacked of the French Revolution and Napoleon and atheism. We smile at their prejudice, yet we have no greater disposition to alter our unintelligent ways. The German would be horrified at having to reckon

his distances in kilometres. The British lion, the French or German or Russian or American eagle,—there is a marvellous love of that symbol of aspiration and progress,—or the rising sun of Japan, must have its own system of weights and measures and coins. Passing through a strip of Canada some months ago I had, from lack of the local stamps, to entrust my post to a kindly waitress; and was, of course, robbed. Of late years, Australia has patriotically resolved to have its own coins, and has fought parliamentary battles over its stamps.

The often-imagined visitor from another planet would not be so much surprised at this extraordinary and costly muddle of patriotic shams as at our faculty for progress in commerce and industry amidst it all. We seem to be quite blind to the larger applications of our modern doctrine of efficiency. Regarded as an economic system, which it really is, the international arrangement of our civilised world is full of crudities which are more worthy of a Papuan pedlar. The contrast between the methods of a large Chicago store or a British or German engineering-business and the methods we retain in far larger and more important concerns will one day be a subject of amazement. The evil of which I am speaking eats into the very heart of an industrial and commercial system which prides itself on its order, economy, and efficiency. Yet this comprehensive muddle is contemplated almost without protest by business-men. If it were merely the leisure hours of travellers which were dissi-

pated in this abstruse study of foreign tongues and coins and customs, we might merely deplore proverbial vagaries of taste. But the abuse is immeasurably greater than this; the advantage we should gain by this scheme of unification can scarcely be calculated. One would think that the reform was really difficult to achieve, or lay under the frown of some imposing school of theologians or moralists or economists !

I omit from the list of perversities whatever is the subject of serious economic controversy. Such things as national tariffs, for instance. However arguable the question may be in England, even the free-trader usually appreciates in such a country as Australia the plea for a protective tariff. There is, at all events, a very serious controversy on the general issue, and it would not be expedient to include among plain reforms any scheme of universal free-trade or universal protection. It is enough to point out that certain obvious, stupid, and mischievous survivals of old conditions gravely hamper our international intercourse. The prestige of our civilisation, as well as a common-sense view of our interest, demand that we shall suppress them. More disputable reforms may be considered afterwards. Our usual method is, one fears, to discuss the more disputable reforms first.

It is difficult to conceive any plea being put forward on behalf of these irrational old customs, but a sufficiently ingenious and superficial apologist

might claim that patriotism bids us maintain them. There is no doubt that the work of reform will have to proceed over the bodies of a number of the pettier patriots. No one can suppose that the task of unification will be accomplished without friction. German professors and Bulgarian politicians will protest against this pernicious cosmopolitan spirit, this horrible wish to denationalise us, this tampering with the sources of national energy. Ardent Irishmen and Welshmen will form very talkative associations for the defence of "the grand old tongue." Rival languages will be put forward, and Esperanto will strain its hitherto respectable resources in denouncing Volapük or the new official speech. French and English and German savants will heatedly press the claims of ideal words in their respective languages to be taken over, and pamphleteers will discuss whether Herr Professor Doktor Schmidt did or did not contribute more suggestions than Professor Smith. A higher criticism of the new language will spread its pale growth like a parasitic fungus.

What is patriotism? In the sense in which the word is still widely, if not generally, understood, it stands for a sentiment that belongs essentially to a pre-rational age and cannot survive unchanged in a rational age. This does not mean that a rational age has no place for sentiments; it means that the sentiments must not affront reason. We cannot at once pride ourselves on being paragons of common-sense, yet slaves to a sentiment which

common-sense must not examine too closely. Loyalty to that larger national family to which we belong : cordial and generous support of its interests : sacrifice, if need be, for its just ambitions : pride in its worthy achievements, even in its worthier superiorities — these are useful and intelligible sentiments, and it is not unreasonable to make a flag the visible symbol of these just interests and achievements. But a blind and indiscriminating devotion to flag or king, a glorification of our national family above others in the roystering fashion of the Middle Ages, a refusal to ask if the demands of our rulers are just or if the interests we are pressed to support are sound and equitable, an obstinate pride in a thing because it is British or German, whether it be wise or no—these are sentiments entirely at variance with the best spirit of our age. We may recognise that even the crude old patriotism has contributed much to the advance of civilisation. This gathering of men into rival national groups has forced the pace, and has at times developed noble qualities. But we must admit also that the same patriotism has inspired hundreds of unjust and stupid wars, and has maintained on their thrones kings and queens who ought to have been dismissed with ignominy.

The progress of civilisation does not entail the suppression, but the refinement, of sentiment, as is very plainly seen in the supposed implications of patriotism. When it is urged that these absurd national diversities of speech and coinage must be

sustained on the ground of patriotism, we ask at once which sound element of patriotism could demand such an anachronism? It is, surely, only the spurious medieval sentiment that could dictate so utter an absurdity! Will the interests of England be endangered because we remove a very serious burden from its economic life and its educational activity? Shall we be less prosperous, less happy, less respected, for correcting an antiquated and foolish practice? These things, we may reflect, were not stupid at the time when they were developed. The resolute patriot may, if he wills, take pride in the relative ingenuity of the people who invented them. Each separate national system was the outcome of special conditions, and the slender commerce between the different communities at the time they were developed did not require a rigorous international standard. One bartered by the piece or the lump. But it is sheer folly to ignore the modern transformation of international life: to fancy that our unwillingness to exert ourselves, even for our own advantage, may be ascribed to some lofty virtue.

It need hardly be said that I am not cherishing a dream of spreading at once over the entire planet a uniformity of language and coins and standards. The leading civilised nations might, within a few years, adopt such a scheme; and a certain number of the smaller and less advanced nations, which aspire to membership of the civilised group, would probably accept the reform speedily enough. On

the other hand, the permeation of the lower races with our ideas would be a slow and difficult process : a part of that general task of civilising the whole race which we have sooner or later to confront. This difficulty does not at all affect the advantage we should gain by adopting a scheme of unification within the family of civilised nations, and it cannot be pleaded as a reason for postponement. But all the reforms I have hitherto discussed will, when they have spread over the more highly organised countries, find a temporary check in this chaotic jumble of peoples on the fringe of civilisation, and it may be useful to discuss the principles which ought to inform our attitude toward them.

Our generation looks out upon these backward branches of the race, not only with a finer sentiment and a stricter regard for principle than any previous generation did, but with a very much clearer knowledge of their meaning. We may, of course, be faithless to our principles in cases : we may casuistically wrap a piece of frank buccaneering of the old type in hypocritical humanitarian phrases. The general attitude is, however, more enlightened, as these pieces of hypocrisy themselves show. We may or may not hold the doctrine of universal brotherhood ; at least we understand the true relation of these more backward races to ourselves, and we are in a much better position to determine our right and our duties. We have advanced considerably since, little more than half a century ago, a stern moralist like Carlyle could defend black-

slavery and denounce as "a gospel of dirt" the scientific revelation which threw light and hope on inferior types of manhood.

The chief difference is that we now see the true relation of the lower races to the higher. It is false to say, as Carlyle did, that some races were created with higher gifts than others, and were therefore divinely appointed as the master-races. The notion is as absurd as the old and profitable legend of the laying of a primitive curse on Ham and his black descendants. Difference of geographical conditions is the chief clue to the unequal development of the various branches of the race. I have in various works developed this theme and will not linger over it here. You have at the start the same human material and capacities in all the scattered groups. But some have been for ages isolated from the stimulating contact of races with a different or a higher culture, and this is the essential condition of advance. Others have, by sheer chance, been so situated that they enjoyed this stimulation in an extraordinary degree. On this principle we can understand the birth of civilisation in that fermenting mass of peoples which settled between the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf ages ago, and the direction of the advancing stream of culture, partly eastward to India and China, but mainly in the more favourable north-western direction.

It is, therefore, no difference of aboriginal outfit, but a difference in the chances of migration and situation, which accounts for the cultural diversity

of races. Yet we must not at once infer that any lower race can, on this account, be drawn from its isolation and lifted to the higher level. There is reason to believe that a race loses its educability if it remains unprogressive for too long a period. The physiological reason may be that the skull closes firmly, at a relatively early age, over the brain in a people in which expansion of brain after puberty has not been encouraged. Take the three "lower races" of Australasia. The Tasmanian was one of the oldest and least cultured branches of the human family, and he died out within a century after contact with the whites. The Maori of New Zealand is the most recent and most advanced of the three aboriginal races. With the Polynesian, he is closely related to the European or Caucasian race, and is certainly educable. The Australian black comes between the two in culture and in the period of his isolation. Australian scientific men who have made the most sympathetic efforts to uplift the black tell me that they have failed, and the race seems to be doomed.

These scientific principles have discredited the old legendary notions about the lower races, but we must not as yet make dogmas of them. Nothing but candid and careful experience will show which races are educable and which ineducable. It is very probable that such peoples as the wild Veddahs of Ceylon, the Aetas of the Philippines, the Yahgans of Tierra del Fuego, and some of the Central African groups, will prove ineducable. Other races which

have been considered "savage" are already proving educable, either as a body or in large numbers of instances. Many peoples have not been tested at all. We are only just at the fringe of this vast and interesting problem.

In regard to the races which, after humane and thorough experiment, prove entirely ineducable, the solution does not offer much difficulty. Once their primitive habits are disturbed, and they begin to live on a pension allotted them by the European nations which have seized their territory, they gradually die out. A very good case may be established by those writers who hold that races which cling incurably to barbarism ought to be painlessly extirpated, or prevented from multiplying. Such races as the Australian blacks are quite familiar with a process of sterilisation which does not interfere with their enjoyment of life. On the other hand, the life led by these domesticated but ineducable savages is hardly worth preserving at all. However, as they are disappearing, one need not press that point. The claim of sane humanitarians, that we have no right to interfere with their conditions and seize their territory, is quite unsound. The human family has a right to see large fertile regions of the earth developed. Who regrets to-day that the Amerinds were pensioned in order to find room for Canada and the United States and Brazil and Argentina? Who does not see the advantage of peopling Australia with a fine and advancing civilisation of (eventually) twenty or

thirty million progressive whites instead of a few hundred thousand miserable aboriginals?

At the other end of the scale we have, as I said, peoples who are most probably or certainly educable. At a hazard one might instance the Thibetans and Siberian Mongolians, the Koreans, the Maoris and Polynesians, the Lapps (of the same blood as the Finns), and a large number of Asiatic and African peoples. We must keep in mind the high civilisation reached by the Amerinds of Peru, whereas their modern descendants, the Quichwas, seem so negligible. In Africa there is a vast amount of experiment and classification to do, and already the pure Bantu races are furnishing scores of men who are susceptible of a university education. I know several of them who are as competent and well-educated as the average English university man.

Has the white race a duty ("the white man's burden") to attempt to civilise the coloured races? I speak in general terms, of course. It is sheer insolence to regard the Chinese or Burmese—one must not mention the Japanese—as lower races. Now, speaking in the abstract, as a matter of general moral principle, the white has no clear duty to civilise the coloured races. The sentiment of brotherhood may inspire a feeling of duty in some, but one cannot build firmly on that phrase. It is, however, not an abstract ethical question. The white men have, in point of fact, spread over the globe, and they are in a fair way to occupy all the territory on which the coloured races (except the

Chinese and Japanese and Burmese) were settled. Only an attitude of general unscrupulousness could ignore the obligation which this seizure of territory implies. England and Germany have, for instance, occupied the islands of the Pacific and made their inhabitants a "subject race." They have done this, not only with a gross lack of discrimination between the Polynesian (who is certainly educable) and the much lower Melanesian, but with a quite cynical idea of the "civilising" process. The work has been left to sailors and travellers, who have decimated the population by spirits and syphilis, or to the crudities of Christian missionaries. The joy of native life has been killed, and the enforcement of clothing (which the natives naturally cast off in the cooler evening, when the sensitive European was not able to see them) has led to an appalling amount of pneumonia and phthisis. We have done much to turn a wonderfully happy and healthy people into a gin-drinking swaddled caricature of a Bank Holiday crowd.

But the lists of our crimes in dealing with the lower races need not be given here. If we white people are to go out among the more backward coloured races, and to profess that we are assuming the paternal function of administering their territory, we must act on some principle. It is rather late in the history of the world to send out civilising expeditions which consist of missionaries presenting copies of the Sermon on the Mount, and soldiers and merchants who, in flagrant contradiction to

the Sermon on the Mount, exploit the natives and appropriate their soil. There must be a serious attempt to educate them, and then an elimination of the unfit. Africa will prove a formidable region for this discriminating work. The Mohammedans themselves have already proved that many of its peoples are capable of culture.

We have a special problem in our treatment of races which, like the Hindus and Egyptians, have already been drawn into the white system. Let us be quite candid with ourselves in this matter. We appropriated their territory for our advantage, not theirs, and our professed modern sentiments are compelling us to say that we are not in possession of their territory in their interest. We protect the Hindu from native despots, the Egyptian from a cruel Mahdi or Pacha, the retired official tells you. However, I do not propose that we should investigate the title-deeds of all our existing empires as regards their oversea possessions; nor do I in the least advocate the dismemberment of such large unities as the British Empire. But the principle on which some would stake our existence in India or Egypt, the maxim that "What we have we hold,"—which is often illustrated by a picture of a particularly stupid-looking bull-dog guarding the British flag,—is the first principle of the pickpocket and the burglar. Modern sentiment has to grant colonial empires a sort of "Bula de Composicion," such as the Spanish Church, for a consideration, grants to pickpockets. The best compromise is

that the peoples which are to-day linked in empires should remain linked ; not as dominant and subject peoples, but as sister-nations working out the destiny of the race according to the highest standards. This implies that, as they assimilate Western culture (as the Hindus are quite rapidly doing), they shall be more and more entrusted with the administration of their own countries. The very different situation of colonies need not be discussed. When Australia and Canada find, if they ever do find, that it is to their interest to set up complete independence, they will not cut the cable : they will cast it off as calmly and confidently as they now cast off the cable of an Orient liner on the quays at Sydney.

Along these lines we may forecast the future, and very slow, drafting of the more backward peoples into the homogeneous family of the more civilised races. The unification of languages, coinage, etc., will be gradually extended to them. But it is not my purpose in this work to contemplate remote tasks and contingencies. A great and practicable reform lies at our doors. The overwhelming majority of the race are already incorporated in civilised nations, and the work of organisation amongst these is urgent and comparatively easy. I am not advocating a fantastic and lofty scheme for which one needs to be prepared by the acceptance of advanced humanitarian sentiments. What I am pleading for is the application to international life of our treasured maxims of common-sense and

efficiency. Those simple and indisputable maxims condemn in the most stringent terms the patriotic shams which we suffer to perplex and burden our life. Let us run the planet on recognised business-principles.

CHAPTER IV

POLITICAL SHAMS

THE reforms I have so far advocated have one peculiar characteristic. They are urgent, easy to grasp, indisputable in principle, and enormously advantageous; but they need international co-operation, and we are only just beginning to form those friendly international contacts which may lead to agreement. Hence it is that, although very contentious reforms have already been realised, these linger, as we say, outside the range of practical politics. But this very phrase reminds us at once of another fundamental irregularity of our life. The man who thinks a proposal dismissed because it is not within the range of practical politics illustrates admirably the indolence of mind which I am assailing. If a useful and economical device were put before him in his business-capacity, and he were told that his business had no room for it, he would at once ask what was wrong with the business. I am contending all through for the application of this progressive spirit to larger concerns than stores or workshops. If our political system, to which we entrust these large concerns,

absolutely ignores some of our finest chances of profit, there is something wrong with the system. Our servants are not doing what they are paid to do.

As I have already briefly contended, our recent experience furnishes a very ghastly confirmation of this suspicion. The British Empire will survive the dangers that beset it, though it will be deeply impaired economically, for two fundamental reasons: the Allies have double the population of the Central European Powers, and they have, including in this respect the United States, far larger ultimate resources in material and money. The fact that we do eventually muddle through will, one fears, content the majority of our people, but the thoughtful patriot will ask two questions. How many hundred millions has our slowness in mobilising our resources cost us, by protracting the war? And what is likely to be the fate of the British Empire if, with a similar slackness, it has at some later date to meet a numerically equal and far more alert enemy?

Let me briefly recount the facts which show that our national business has been grossly mismanaged. Can any person look back on all the facts which are now public property and say that our soldiers and statesmen were innocent in not perceiving the grave possibility of war with Germany at any time in the last three years? That, however, will scarcely be said: the readiness of our fleet is a sufficient reply. We know further that the general character of the war was foreseen. England was

to help France and Belgium, on French or Belgian soil. England's co-operation on land was, as events have shown, vitally necessary. Yet the unpreparedness of Britain for a great continental campaign was entirely scandalous. No doubt there would have been a risk in openly enlarging the army or creating great stores of material. Germany would, in its unamiable way, have asked questions. Tender-hearted Members of Parliament would have denounced our provocative proceedings. But a preparation of plans, a census of our resources, a scheme for the immediate enlistment of the business-ability of the country and the full use of all our industrial machinery—these and a dozen other most important measures could have been taken in this country as safely and secretly as they were in Germany. Not only were they not taken, but the military preparations were actually relaxed. It has transpired, and is not disputed, that our great Arsenal was only partially occupied ; and Mr. A. Chamberlain has publicly stated that Kynochs had for the year 1914—the expected year of war—a Government order two-thirds less than they are capable of executing in a week, and do now execute in a week.

The second fact is the remarkable failure to forecast the conditions of the war. If it be urged that a layman cannot judge how far such a failure is culpable, the answer is prompt: the German authorities, who had had no more experience of war than we, did forecast the conditions. Their

minute and energetic elaboration of the whole scheme of the war contrasts extraordinarily with the sluggish and conventional ease of our authorities.

The third and gravest fact is our appalling and costly slowness in mobilising our resources when the war began. Six months after the outbreak of war I went over a very large engineering shop in the north. Out of hundreds of men only a score or two were engaged on war-material: and one of the two objects on which this mere handful of men were engaged has proved to be wholly valueless. At that time, and for months afterwards, the workers of Britain were encouraged in their easy ways, and the bulk of the manufacturers were encouraged to go on with their usual business, by official assurances that no greater effort was needed. When our disgusted soldiers sent us a message that, not "the weather," but a scandalous shortage of ammunition and machine-guns kept them back, the Prime Minister, quoting the "highest available authority," publicly declared this to be untrue. We were asked rather to admire the way in which we had dispatched the greatest expeditionary force known in history: as if the enormous progress of modern times did not make this superiority a matter of course. When criticism increased, we cried for the gag and the public prosecutor, and we garlanded the portraits of the very men who had disgraced us; and we agreed to the retention or promotion of incompetent men, on obvious party-grounds.

Happily one minister had the grit and patriotism

to call to his aid a group of business-men, and the facts could no longer be concealed. Mr. Lloyd George admitted that since the beginning of the war, we had increased a thousandfold our production of munitions, yet were still far behind the Germans and far short of our needs; and at last, eleven months after the outbreak of war, we began to organise, or at least to ascertain, our resources. Again we loudly congratulated ourselves on our energy. We cried shame on all critics and pessimists and people who wanted more. We fancied ourselves in the character of Atlas, taking the whole burden on our massive shoulders, to spare our weaker Allies. But the sinister light which this late increase of output threw on the first six months, or more, of indolent incompetence was quite disregarded. We genially overlooked the fact that the delay of our advance was costing us nearly a hundred millions a month. We allowed less prominent affairs to be conducted with the same indolent insufficiency. The most absurdly inadequate measures were taken to control the prices of food and coal, and scarcely a thought was given to the tremendous economic problem which will confront us when the war is over, or to the means of recouping ourselves by a systematic promotion of our over-sea-trade.

In a word, the magnificent organisation and ordered national devotion of the German people make the conduct of England during the first year of the war seem clumsy, lazy, and full of danger

for the future. For this the chief blame quite obviously falls on our statesmen. English soldiers have at least been second to none in the field: English artisans have, since the need was acknowledged, worked magnificently. It is the directing brain that was sluggish and incompetent. The magnitude of the sudden task does not excuse our rulers, nor does the very large service that was actually done—which I do not for a moment overlook—lessen the scandal. If a political machine does not know how to enlarge itself in less than twelve months to meet a new and very urgent task, especially a task that it ought to have foreseen, it is unfit to control our national destiny. Our governmental system has proved itself most dangerously and mischievously unfit to meet such a national emergency, and this catastrophic experience may encourage the reader to examine with patience the criticisms which I propose to pass on it.

Here again we submit to the tyranny of a largely obsolete tradition. When the story of the development of human institutions can be written with a detachment of which we are yet incapable, one of the strangest pages will be that which tells of the evolution of Church and State. From the early days when some exceptionally powerful warrior is raised on his shield and saluted as chief or king, and when some weird individual earns the repute of being able to control or propitiate the mighty powers of the environing world, government and religion steadily advance to a commanding position

in the life of the people. The two men of power, the king and the priest, must have establishments in accord with their value to the tribe, and the palace and the temple rise in spacious dignity above the mean cluster of huts. Time after time the race turns to examine the tradition which has been so deeply impressed on it, and kings and gods are cast from their thrones ; but new dynasties always arise. Of Rome, no less than of Thebes or Nineveh, it is the monuments of kings and gods that survive. Only a few centuries ago the European city consisted mainly of two institutions : the palace and the cathedral. The bulk of the citizens huddled in squalid fever-stricken houses beyond the fringe of the estates of their secular and priestly rulers.

The modern age, with its inconvenient questions and its bold speech, arrives. Commerce develops, and the palace and cathedral disappear in the forest of soaring buildings. When the roofs of the new commerce and the new commoner rise to a level with the roof of the palace or the cathedral, when men are no longer overshadowed by the old powers, the imagination is released. The divine right of kings goes in a fury of revolutionary flame : kings must henceforth rule by human right and answer at a human tribunal, which is more exacting and alert than the old tribunal. Yet the power of the dead tradition is amazing. In England men still bow reverently when the king addresses them as " my subjects " and talks of " my empire " : still crown every entertainment, spiritual or gastronomic,

with fervent aspirations which would lead an ill-informed spectator to imagine that they regarded the king's health as mystically connected with the health of the nation : still describe bishops and the heads of families which have been sufficiently long idle and wealthy as their " lords."

These archæological survivals are, no doubt, innocuous, if irritating. The more serious feature is that they help to make so many people insensible of the miserable compromises we endure in our reorganised State. They are part of that super-abundant ash which clogs and dulls the fire of the nation's life. The nineteenth century, rightly and inevitably, adopted a democratic scheme of public administration. It was seen that, if the king were not so close a friend of the Almighty as had been supposed, there was no visible reason why the destinies of the nation should be entrusted to his judgment : which was, as a rule, not humanly impressive. Luckily, certain nations had won the right to do a good deal of talking before the king came to a decision, or the right to hold Parliaments, and Europe generally adopted this model. The Parliament House now towered upward in the city, and it did the real business of directing the nation's affairs. The king became a kind of grand seal for the measures enacted by Parliament. Some nations, the number of which is increasing, regarded the seal as a costly and avoidable luxury, and abolished it : some kept the king, with all his stately language and pretty robes and sparkling

jewellery, and abolished the "lords": some kept the king and the lords, but deprived them of real power. The English nation, which is famous for its common-sense, its audacity, and its ability, belongs to the last group. It invented that remarkable phrase, "self-government": which ingeniously preserves the fiction that someone has a right to govern other people, yet conciliates the modern spirit by intimating that the people really govern their governors.

Into the extraordinary confusion of forms and formulæ which has resulted from this compromise it would be waste of time to enter. Does it really matter that we allow our king to put on our coins a flattering portrait of himself, with an intimation that he rules as "by the grace of God"? He is quite conscious that he rules us—if his melodramatic relation to us may be called ruling—on the understanding that he never contradicts us. We are not now knocked on the head, except by an intoxicated patriot, if we refuse to stand while our neighbours chant their insincere incantation about his health: we go, not to the Tower, but to the ordinary law-court, if we mention his personal frailties; and the portentous seriousness with which he takes his robes and his formulæ injures none, and amuses many. No doubt, slovenly mental habits are always to be deplored, yet these things are not in themselves important enough to be included in a list of serious reforms. What we do need to examine critically is this scheme of self-government by

which we now manage our national affairs : very badly, it appears.

This political machinery is divided into two sections: municipal government and national government. The former, from which every element of "government" except the name has departed, need not be considered at length. It consists of groups of citizens who are understood to excel in public spirit and self-sacrifice, so that they devote a large part of their time to the unpaid service of their fellow-citizens. Every few years a man, of whom you had probably never heard before, calls to implore you, with a quite painful humility and courtesy, to allow him to discharge this self-denying function. The next day another man, of whom also you had never heard before, calls to inform you, in discreet language, that his rival is a spendthrift, a rogue, or a fool ; and that *he* is the man to represent you with due regard to economy and with absolute disinterestedness. You probably refrain from voting for either, since you have not the abundant leisure of a libel-court. Your streets will somehow get paved, and your children schooled, and you will pay the bill. But you may discover after a time that the air is thick with charges of "jobbery," or that some local councillor has been promoted to the higher and more lucrative political world on the ground of "many years' experience of local administration."

If you happen to live in the Metropolis, where the intelligence of the nation is clotted, so to say, you

find municipal life even more complex than this. The eager rivals who solicit the honour of doing your work for nothing are divided into bitterly hostile schools. Each school spends hundreds of thousands of pounds in a periodical effort to convince you that the other school is going to swindle you. Each plasters the wall with repulsive typical portraits of its opponents, and you see yourself depicted as a weak and amiable, but small-witted, figure (or, perhaps, as a burly and very stupid-looking farmer), whose pockets are being picked. Each produces a most exact statistical proof that its opponents have actually picked your pockets, and that the "reds" or "blues" are the only people with a really disinterested desire to spend some hours every day in the gratuitous discharge of public duties. They spend great sums of money every few years for the purpose of securing this thankless burden and facing the vituperation of their opponents. You seek illumination in the press, and you find, in rival journals, a mass of contradictory statements and mutual accusations of lying. However, the system is thoroughly British in its encouragement of individual action and public spirit, and you overlook all the direct and indirect corruption it fosters.

What is a man to do? One can at least search very rigorously the credentials and the public action of the man who "solicits your vote," and encourage the appearance of really independent and fine-spirited men and women. I have, naturally,

described the broad features and general abuses of the system, but there are, of course, large numbers of men in it who are sincerely disinterested. In the main, however, municipal politics is tainted and complicated by the party-system of the large political world, and to this we may turn.

That section of the political machine which controls national affairs is obviously of the first importance. On its working rests the grave issue of peace or war ; to it is entrusted, in the last resort, the great task of educating the nation ; and through it alone can we secure any of those numerous reforms which are to undo the tyranny of shams and abolish so much avoidable misery and confusion. One ought therefore to be gratified to see how large a place politics occupies in the public mind, which is otherwise so little inclined to serious matters, and in the public press, which so faithfully mirrors the thought of the nation : to see how the prominent or eloquent politician surpasses in public esteem the greatest artist or scientist, and even rivals in popularity the prettiest actress of the hour : to see that four-fifths of our public honours are reserved for politicians and statesmen, and for those less gifted but more wealthy men who give them practical support. Unhappily, when one looks closely into this apotheosis of politics, one finds that its merit is merely superficial : that a very large proportion of the more thoughtful people in every civilised community look on politics with disdain, and that some of the more independent

of our politicians confess that one must almost lay aside one's honesty and ideals on entering the political world.

A series of grave struggles and threats of civil war in the first half of the nineteenth century inaugurated the present political phase in Europe. It transpired after Waterloo that the English parliamentary system, in which our statesmen took such pride, was a hollow and corrupt sham. A comparatively few wealthy landowners controlled the nation, and bought votes for their nominees. After some years of agitation the working men of the great manufacturing centres formed armies and threatened to force the doors of Westminster at the point of the pike. This elicited a system of restricted, but real, popular representation. Later enlargements of the franchise improved the system, and to-day some six or seven million adult males elect our legislators. Until recently this scheme was largely frustrated by the power of a non-elected House to suppress any measure which did not please a privileged minority, but this is now materially modified. Six million free and adult representatives of the nation appoint and control the men who make our laws, and direct the king how to act.

But in practice this admirable theory becomes a mockery and an illusion. It may be taken as a Euclidean postulate that out of six million people of any civilised nation four or five millions will be—shall we say?—somnolent : not from want of

brain, but from want of constant exercise of it. A very earnest idealist of the last century, Mr. George Jacob Holyoake, proposed that, for the great efficiency of our political machinery, every elector should, before he received a vote, be compelled to pass an examination in political economy and constitutional history. Since few Members of Parliament, to say nothing of voters, would have passed the examination, the proposal was rejected, and the education of the voter was left to the interested political parties and to the press which supported them, or was supported by them. The result was that two rival organisations, roughly corresponding to the two attitudes of the modern mind toward new ideas (progressive and conservative), gradually increased in wealth and power until they were able to control the electorate and exclude from representation every finer shade of political thought. The machinery by which this is done does not leap to the eyes, as the French say, and the average elector proudly contrasts our political system with that of most other nations.

Candidly, we may take some pride in the contrast. The struggles and sacrifices of our fathers have won for us a system which is far superior to that which has hitherto prevailed in Russia, to the despotic medievalism of Prussia, to the grave insincerity of Spanish political life, to the confusion and occasional corruption of French or Italian politics, to the remarkable activity which precedes

a. presidential election in the United States. Our political life is relatively free from large corruption. I happened to be in New Zealand when the "Marconi Scandal" was agitating England, and I remember politicians of that progressive little land smiling at the word "scandal" and hinting that they were more adventurous. Some of our discontent is, no doubt, due to women-writers who magnify the evil in order to persuade us to enlist their refining influence. I do not, in fact, think that Mr. Belloc and Mr. Cecil Chesterton have proved some of the graver charges which they brought in their indictment of our "servile State." It will need something more than a list of matrimonial connections to persuade us that Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Winston Churchill were in the habit of meeting, amiably and clandestinely, Mr. Bonar Law and Mr. F. E. Smith for the collusive arrangement of our laws.

Yet there is enough in the familiar criticisms of our political machinery to justify one in saying that the political sham is, even now, intolerable. What, candidly, is the procedure? A general election is announced, and two men call, or send agents, to solicit the honour of representing you in Parliament. In the district in which I write at the moment one candidate is a wealthy and muddle-headed Liberal: the other is a wealthy and (politically) equally muddle-headed Conservative. Neither of them has the remotest idea of representing my national wishes,—they would blush to

be suspected of it,—and neither has ever spoken in Parliament ; so I have never yet voted.

But I am an eccentric man. Let us take a normal case. You notice, as a rule, that during the few years before the election a wealthy man has been openly suffered, or directed from his party-head-quarters, to “ nurse ” the constituency. Hundreds will cast votes for him solely because they fear a withdrawal of his subscriptions to their chapels and football clubs, and of his open-handed philanthropy. As the election approaches, another candidate appears. He also is, as a rule, a wealthy man, and he spends between one and two thousand pounds in disturbing the judgment and inflaming the emotions of the voters. Pictorial posters, which might have adorned the walls of some Pyrenean cavern in the Old Stone Age, are massed near the doors of some dark “ committee room ” or spread over the town. The brain struggles feebly with the contradictory statements of orators and journals. And on the day of the election the two wealthy rivals for the honour of printing M.P. on their cards, and the duty of voting as they are directed by their superiors, flood the district, although it has an excellent tram-service, with expensive cars and carriages, to take the tired working man to the poll.

Possibly one of the candidates is not a wealthy man, and you begin to speculate on the source of his thousand pounds, or even three hundred pounds. Very few voters do inquire, of course ; most of them

would be surprised to know how much a man spends in soliciting the honour of representing them—he has usually a great contempt for them—in Parliament. The more inquisitive voter, however, would discover that the poorer candidate is in a special sense the representative of a particular party, and he would touch the fringe of a peculiar and ingenious system. I happened one day to mention to a friend certain advanced opinions of a Member of Parliament. “That,” he said grimly, “will interest my father-in-law; he finances Mr. —.” Through the party-organisation this wealthy and highly respectable manufacturer paid the election expenses and part of the income—Members of Parliament had not then a salary—of candidates or Members in various remote towns. The manufacturer, or the various manufacturers who do this sort of thing, will eventually be knighted or baronettèd; their sons will have a chance of a secretaryship, or even of Cabinet rank. The secretly subsidised Member will go to Westminster, an automatic voter. In fact, since a candidate must generally have the sanction of the central organisation of one or other party before he can venture to solicit votes, even wealth does not usually relieve him of the party-tyranny.

What, then, is the party? It is not so much a creed as a wealthy and powerful organisation. Once it was a group of men who happened to have the same ideas. By a natural evolution of organisation—one sees the same thing in the evolution of

Churches—it has become rather a machine for impressing those ideas on men. In a sense, it is an oligarchy. We must remember such facts as the dismissal of Mr. Balfour, and the powerlessness of Mr. Asquith to get rid of a certain Minister whom he disliked. The power of the front-benchers is not absolute. But on the whole the party is an aristocracy of wealthy men, titled men, and able men, which rules the country for a term of years. Its leading agents are the Ministers and Whips: the body of the party is an association for carrying out its will, and for adding the attractions of parochial entertainment and cheap club-life to the more austere cult of ideas. Its revenue is, to a great extent, secret; but the annual lists of honours reveal very plainly that it conducts an unblushing traffic in such things. The reasons alleged in the published list are often too ludicrous for words. Privately one can often ascertain the exact price.

With this wealth the party-aristocracy controls the electoral campaign and the elected Members. It has, further, at its disposal a large number of highly paid positions, or functions which lead to highly paid positions, or profitable little occasional jobs, or political pensions, or a Civil List (which is grossly abused), and so on. These it dangles before the eyes of impecunious or ambitious critics. Here are two facts within my slender personal knowledge of these matters. A very influential Socialist (my informant) was invited to a small dinner of the party-aristocrats and diplo-

matically informed that he might be useful in office : another drastic critic was assured by a Cabinet Minister, through a mutual friend (my informant), that nothing would be done for him until he ceased to criticise.

The system is, on both sides of the House, corrupt, demoralising, and intensely prejudicial to the interests of the country. We found its danger during the South African War, and we perceive it far more plainly to-day. What ought to be the brightest intellectual fire in the land is sluggish, choked with ash, served often with inferior material. The permanent departments of State which depend on it are correspondingly sluggish. In an emergency it—after a humiliating trial of its own ability—turns to business-men. Its whole tradition and procedure are abominable. Men who are poor and independent may bruise their shins on the doors in vain. Men of no ability are promoted, even to peerages and the Cabinet, because their fathers contributed much to the party's purse or prestige, and they themselves will at least be loyal. Men who raise critical voices in the House are snubbed and suppressed : men who criticise outside are safely ignored. The ablest and the most sincere men in the party—men like Sir Edward Grey and Mr. Lloyd George—acquiesce in all this.

The electoral system and the procedure of the House of Commons are designed to protect this monstrous scheme. The large fee which is exacted of candidates and the very large sums which wealthy

men are allowed to spend on elections intimidate able and independent, but impecunious, men. The election is spread over a week or two in order to give wealthy men, who may be relied upon to support the constitutional parties, an opportunity of voting in several constituencies, and in order that Ministers may give more aid to their weaker supporters. For the polling-day Saturday is avoided as much as possible, because on that day a larger percentage of the workers would vote, and they are apt to vote against the constitutional parties. Cars and carriages are permitted because the candidates of the workers will easily be surpassed in this well-known advantage by candidates of the great parties. Minorities are hopelessly excluded from representation, such as they would have under a system of proportional representation, because they would send to the House a number of independent Members who would disturb all the calculations of the Whip and all the tricks of party-government. Under a system of proportional representation it would be quite easy for some scores of able and earnest men to secure election at very small cost, by merely circulating declarations of their views; but this, or a grave increase of the Labour Members, would wreck the party-system, and therefore the most democratic of our orthodox politicians maintain all the abuses and injustices of our system.

The division of constituencies is further designed to protect this iniquitous and corrupt scheme. Universities, the City of London, and boroughs

like Durham, Bury St. Edmunds, and Montgomery—each of which has a population of less than 17,000 souls—have an equal right to one unit of representation in Parliament with Wandsworth, the Romford division of Essex, or the Harrow division of Middlesex, each of which has more than a quarter of a million inhabitants. Eighty-three constituencies, most of them having a large proportion of the more intelligent workers, have a population of more than 100,000 each: forty-four constituencies have a population of less than 40,000 each. In other words, half the people of England and Wales elect 167 Members of Parliament: the other, and notoriously less intelligent half, elect 323 Members of Parliament.

From Gladstone downwards even our most “democratic” statesmen have acquiesced in these enormities of our electoral system; and they have meantime expended much eloquence on the injustice of the Prussian system, and have expressed ardent hopes for the emancipation of the people of Italy, or Bulgaria, or Persia, or some other remote land. Yet these features of our electoral scheme are retained solely in order to protect the party-system: to keep in the hands of a group, which is largely hereditary and is at all events a small and jealous caste, all the prestige and emoluments of the higher positions. Even the grave peril of a national catastrophe, owing to this restriction of power and responsibility to a group of moderate talent, does not shake their tradition. We shall, when this war

is over, see them resist reform as energetically as ever.

Within the House of Commons itself a mass of old rules and customs are maintained for the same purpose. The hours of work are still arranged on the old supposition, that a Member of Parliament is a man who, with great self-sacrifice, devotes a large part of his time gratuitously to the service of his country. The most important work in the nation's economy is relegated to the hours when every healthy man is disposed to rest and recreate himself: indeed, the more important the issue at stake, the more certain it is to be discussed during the worst working hours out of the twenty-four. One has only to glance at our legislators on their benches after dinner to realise the significance of it. The majority of them are plainly reconciled to the theory that the heads of the party have done the necessary work during the day: *their* business is to keep sufficiently awake to vote correctly.

The arrangement of business is not less iniquitous. The Ministry decides that certain measures of reform are needed, either in the interest of the people or in their own interest, and, since they have an assured majority of "Ayes," the lengthy debate is almost superfluous. The passing of the measure has been secured in advance, or it would not be put forward. The rare event of miscalculation, and the still rarer event of independent action, need not be regarded. No Member is, even in these cases, influenced by the long and tiring speeches which

are made about the matter. At one time the debates had a certain elocutionary elegance, at least; now they represent an unattractive sham-fight, and abuse is being increasingly substituted for rhetoric. The most paltry trickery is employed on both sides, because every man is aware that his speech is really addressed to his followers outside the House, and he must, *in* the House, rely on quite other devices than eloquence. Yet all this pseudo-gravity is lightened occasionally by sittings in which some measure of the greatest importance, but not introduced by the Government, is treated as flippantly as it would be in a humorous debate during a long sea-voyage.

If a man is instructed by his constituents to represent in the House some special need of theirs, or some public reform which has millions to support it, he finds that "the rules of the House," or the rules of the oligarchy, will not allow him to introduce it. A very small fraction of the time of the House is granted for the discussion of such proposals; but the debate is farcical, and is often looked forward to in advance as such, because everybody knows what will be the issue, even if a majority of the House really favours the proposal. Measures of grave social importance, like women-suffrage, have been arbitrarily crushed by the oligarchs for thirty years,—as early as 1886 women-suffrage had 343 supporters on the benches,—and this tyranny and injustice of a few ministers have led to the most violent and bitter recrimination.

This is the political machinery to which we entrust the most delicate and momentous issues of our national life, and to which we have to look for the realisation of our most treasured hopes of reform. The impartial critic will not question that there are men in the political world as eager for reform as he, or that during the last half-century some excellent social legislation has been passed. These measures are, however, due in great part to a studied endeavour to retain or gain support in the country,—the Insurance Act, for instance,—and many of them—relating to the sale of cigarettes, to the admission of children into public-houses, to the flogging of procurers—are small sentimental reforms which occupy time that could be better employed. We think that we open a new epoch of civilisation when we give a very small pension to a very aged worker, but the problem of the roots of poverty or the abolition of warfare does not enter the party-programme. Our bishops enthuse over their success in inducing a complaisant Home Secretary to lay the lash on the backs of a sordid little group of criminals, and even offer to roll up their own lawn sleeves for the job; but they are indifferent, or hostile, when other people would induce our Ministers to amend those brutalities of our marriage-laws which tend to foster prostitution.

This political machine must be radically and comprehensively reformed before it can be a fit instrument for the reform of the nation. All the pyrotechnic distractions and gross irregularities of

an election must be suppressed : all plural voting must be abolished : the comedy of cars for feeble voters must be forbidden : all indirect bribery, either of voters or candidates, must be rigorously punished. Candidates must put a simple and sober statement of their views and proposals before the electorate, and no further expense should be permitted. Some system of proportional representation and secondary elections should ensure that large minorities would not be entirely without representation. The election should be confined to one day, preferably a Sunday, and stripped of all melodramatic nonsense and occasion for corruption.

The party-system will, no doubt, long survive in English political life. Within twenty years or so the word " Conservative " will, as in other countries, pass out of use, and the Conservative elements will unite under the banner of " Liberalism," in opposition to " Labour." It is, of course, the dread of this issue which at present unites the constitutional parties in opposing reform. One can, by studying advancing countries, even foresee a next phase. The Conservative elements will unite in a " Labour " party against the Socialists ; and in the dim future we may, like Anatole France, foresee a Socialist commonwealth established and an Anarchist party furiously assailing it.

But, though the party-system be retained (very much modified by proportional representation), this disgusting sale of honours and offices, this oligarchic tyranny over the House and the con-

stituencies, will not survive. Reform of the electoral procedure will enable a large group of independent men—independent of the large parties—to enter Parliament, and the removal of the Irish and other Members, who concentrate on a single issue and are willing to traffic on other issues, will reduce the old majorities. I do not doubt that fresh complications will arise. The weakness of proportional representation is that it will certainly lead to a number of sectarian groups. "We Catholics" will, of course, return Catholic Members, ready to sell their votes on various issues in the interest of the sect; and the Baptists and Methodists, and so on, will be tempted to retort. We shall have a teetotal group, and a Puritan group, and an anti-wallpaper group, etc. We must hope that the sterner education of the electorate will secure that these trivialities do not endanger grave national interests. The dissolution of the old Conservative party will leave the Liberal party unable to defend its abuses; it will have no opportunity of collusion or retaliation. So we may have in time a political machine—a body of men, appointing their own leaders, soberly chosen by each 100,000 of the population, regarding Parliament as a grave national council, not a theatre for the display of wit and rhetoric—which will effectively carry out the will of an advancing people and enlist the interest of the most thoughtful.

I am in all this assuming that sex-barriers and privileges will be entirely abolished, but I prefer

to discuss the position of woman in its entirety in a later chapter. It must be explained, however, that in taking 100,000 as a unit of representation, I am contemplating an electorate of thirteen or fourteen million voters. Something between a hundred and two hundred Members of Parliament are surely sufficient, and would make a much more practical and alert body than our present stuffy, sleepy, and overcrowded House.

It seems very doubtful if a Second Chamber, in any form, is a real social need. A House of "Lords" is, of course, an insufferable anomaly and medieval survival. It is amazing that this hereditary transmission of titles—and such titles!—and wealth has so long survived the stinging raillery that men like Thackeray poured on it long ago: it is still more amazing when we measure the intelligence and public spirit of our "lords." Even if we weed out the less intelligent, or those whose interest in horses or actresses or theology is more conspicuous than their interest in the nation's affairs, it is preposterous that such a body should retain the least control of a properly elected House of Commons. We may trust that before many decades all hereditary titles will be abolished, and this will demolish at once the name and the more offensive part of the character of the Second House. The idea that because one had a distinguished or fortunate or unscrupulous ancestor, or one has large estates or an American wife, one is fitted to control our legislators, is too ludicrous for discussion. It is sometimes pleaded

that they "have a large stake in the country." One may surely reply, not only that they would do well to have their large stake more ably represented, but that poverty has an even greater and more pressing right to representation.

As to the bishops, it is still more difficult to discover why they are allowed to control secular legislation. They have been chosen for certain doctrinal and administrative functions, partly because of their ability to discharge those functions, partly because they had a convenient income, and partly because they could command political or domestic influence. But even the men who have earned a mitre because they were admirably fitted to wear it, and could hold together a large group of clergy with conflicting doctrinal ideas, are not obviously qualified for the work of legislation. Their record in the legislative assembly is deplorable. They have for ages blessed our militarist and bellicose traditions. They have, in their own interest, resisted nearly every important social reform until recent years, and even now they display a keen social sense only when there is question of flogging a few score of perverts, or something of that kind. They have no place in a modern political system, and their presence in it is an anachronistic reminder of the time when they monopolised education.

Another element of our Second Chamber consists of men who have been promoted from the First Chamber, generally in order to watch the interest

of their party, or made peers for public service or service to the party. The various creatures of the party are one of the abuses we have to correct. Even the others are of questionable value. Is Lord Morley more judicious, or more alive to the highest interests of the nation and the race, than the Right Honourable John Morley was? Does age give wisdom to Lord Gladstone, or did it enhance that of Lord Roberts? Is it not a fact that nine men out of ten adopt a sluggish and reluctant attitude in age, and are unfitted to deal with the proposals of middle-aged men? There is, at all events, occasion for very careful discrimination, whereas our present practice is to reward, indiscriminately, a supposed merit or a service rendered to the party with a seat in the "Upper" House.

The third class of peers calls for the same observation. Success in manufacture or finance or law, or a willingness to give large sums to the party-funds, is not an obvious qualification for controlling legislation. While these men are in the prime of their vigour and judgment the nation dispenses entirely with their services. We invite their co-operation in the national business when they are understood to be too old and inelastic to attend any longer to their less important commercial concerns. It is, in fact, impossible to frame a really impressive plea for a Second Chamber of any description. I venture to say that if an historical inquiry were made into the services rendered by Second Chambers since the beginning of the parliamentary

system, it would be found that they have rendered little or no real service, while they have obstructed the work of reform in every land. Their record—the first thing we ought to consult—condemns them emphatically. If the Members of a Second Chamber are not elected by the people, they invariably consult class-interests: if they are elected, they, as one sees in Australia, are superfluous.

This political system is completed by the royal assent to Bills and the royal power to choose Ministers. The former is now an idle form: the latter is an intolerable abuse. If the people are self-governed, the leading agents in the Government are Ministers of the people, not of the king. The Members of Parliament ought to choose the Ministers. Kingship is a medieval survival, and it is inconsistent with a clear and practical conception of the nation's business to retain these archaic forms and institutions. The trend of political evolution is visibly from kingdoms to republics. A "monarch" in the twentieth century is as anachronistic as a "lord"; an hereditary monarch is an outrage of modern sentiments. Once more, we need to test the institution by its historical merits or demerits.

Many people seem to regard our Constitution much as certain lowly tribes regard the mysterious stone which has dropped from heaven amongst them. Some even of our politicians display a kind of fetishistic terror if a measure is projected that seems to them to infringe or enlarge our Constitution.

They brandish their spears before the idol and talk of shedding their blood in its defence. They are at times "Balliol Scholars," or something of that kind, yet one would suppose that they were quite unaware how our Constitution arose, and what plain and indisputable right we have to revise and improve it. It is a sort of ancient mansion to which a modern owner has added billiard-rooms and workshops and a garage. But it has assuredly not the æsthetic charm of a medieval building, and this age of ours needs to reconsider, if not reconstruct, it. It will be a fine day for England when we have a Royal Commission sitting in judgment on our Constitution : calmly discussing, amongst other matters, the expediency of asking the throne to retire on half-pay, and all its parasites to retire on no pay.

I have already described the changes which are likely to occur in that large political structure, the Empire. The various regions of the earth which constitute it cling together on the understanding that we are quite insincere when we talk of them as our "possessions." It is a federation of free nations, bound together by thinning ties of blood and by the advantage of a collective defence. When the military system is abandoned there will merely be a somewhat faded and amiable sentiment uniting the imperial fragments to each other more closely than to their nearer neighbours. One may hope that they will remain united, for a large empire is a good thing, if it has large ideals : it is a university of civilisation. But unless we purge our

correspondence of archaic forms the "Colonies" may grow impatient. The Colonial of the third generation, and often of the second, has very little respect for England. Candid Australians would make some of our Imperialists tremble with concern. Our colonial "governors," of course, report that loyalty is undiminished, because a few hundred families in Melbourne and Sydney press with undiminished snobbishness to their garden-parties. These ornamental nonentities ought to be withdrawn. Perfect sincerity in our relations with the Colonies will do most to maintain the federation. The splendid co-operation of Australia and Canada in the war has shown that we have little to fear.

India and Egypt form a special problem, complicated by the fact that, in their condition of dependence, they are large and nutritious fields for the employment of our sons. It would, however, be foolish to ignore the great change that is taking place in them. Hindus tell me that, when Lord Morley became Secretary of State, the advanced Nationalists sent him a private message to the effect that they would co-operate with a humanitarian like him; and he snubbed them. A very large proportion of them are beyond the stage of being impressed by *durbars*, and are impatient that the masses should be kept in that childlike state of mind. We set up a fictitious "Oriental imagination," and try to make the Orientals live down to it. The example of China and Japan ought to have destroyed our illusions about "the East." The

difference is one of culture, which may at any time be changed. We shall have to deal more frankly and generously with Egypt and India, or else cease to rail at Prussian or Russian despotism.

However, Imperialism is not a grave or pressing problem. The Empire will run its destined evolutionary course. For us the grave matter is the corruption which clogs our political machine and the perverse tradition which prevents the multitude from seeing it. The awarding of honours and lucrative positions should be withdrawn entirely from politicians, because, even if we compelled them to publish accounts, they would still add to their resources or prestige by this inveterate traffic. The king might at least render us the service of purifying this department of national life : perhaps have a list prepared by the Privy Council and checked by independent inquiry. I remember how Sir Leslie Stephen told me that he shrank from being added to the inglorious list of mayors who had entertained princes or coal-owners who had financed elections or built chapels. This would cut one of the chief roots of our present political corruption, but we need to press for a thorough education of the people. It must realise that the political machine is dangerously clogged and sluggish : that its " democratic " character is a sham : and that its energy is wasted on measures which are insignificant in comparison with the mighty tasks of education, pacification, and industrial organisation which it ought to undertake.

CHAPTER V

THE DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH

IN the last sentence of the last chapter I spoke of education, pacification, and industrial organisation as the three monumental tasks of a reformed political system. If the supreme object of a central administration—the sooner we cease to talk of “government” the better—is to make a people healthy, prosperous, and happy, these are surely the three reforms to which it will most resolutely apply itself. I have spoken of the very grave and pressing nature of one of these reforms: the need to abolish militarism and war. Later chapters will deal with education, in the very broad and rich meaning which I assign to the word. Here I would sketch the problem which seems to me to weigh heavily on us in connection with the distribution of wealth and the present disorganisation of industry.

It is useful sometimes to imagine ourselves in the year 3000 or so looking back with critical eye on the twentieth century. One pictures the future historian—some narrowly specialised expert on the social life of the second decade of the twentieth

century—discoursing on us. A strange and interesting people, he will say. They boasted of their intelligence, and they really did display a creditable measure of intelligence in their research and their applied science. They regarded themselves as far superior in humane sentiment to the Middle Ages, to which they properly belong, and they put forward many excellent vague proposals of social improvement. Yet it is not easy to understand their slavery to ancient prejudices, sometimes of a quite barbaric character. A superficial observer would say that the contradiction was due to their unhappy practice of leaving the majority of the community at a low level of culture, so that the intelligent minority were checked by a slower-minded majority. But it is a singular fact that some of the most intelligent men among the minority, such as Mr. A. Balfour and Mr. F. E. Smith, held much the same views as the agricultural workers, and made a kind of religion, which they called Conservatism, of this obstinate retention of old traditions. They seem, with all their pride in their culture, to have mistaken their place in the evolution of the race. No people is entitled to be called civilised which complacently tolerates war, squalid and widespread poverty, dense areas of ignorance, political corruption, and the many other remnants of barbarism which they tolerated. The twentieth century was the last hour of barbarism, lit by a few rays of the civilisation which dawned in the twenty-first century.

If the infliction of pain and misery is, as I believe,

the worst form of crime, this retention of war and poverty is the gravest of our social transgressions. But the guilt of our generation in regard to these two crimes is very unequal. The way to abolish war is clear, but the remedy of this other open sore of our social organism, a poverty which stunts and embitters the lives of millions in every large civilisation, is not at all clear. The plain man who, oppressed by the spectacle of this desolating, unchanging poverty, seeks a remedy in social literature, is at once beset by a dozen rival theorists. The Socialist, the Anarchist, the Eugenist, the Malthusian, the Single-Taxer, and other austere thinkers press on him their contradictory formulae and their mutual abuse ; these in turn are assailed contemptuously by men who are not less acquainted with economic matters ; and the older political parties observe, with a sigh, that poverty seems to be an inherent evil of every industrial order, and we can do no more than mitigate its hardships. To this last position the plain man usually comes.

Let us grant at once that the older political parties have done much toward the alleviation of poverty. No one who is acquainted with the condition of the workers a hundred years ago can hesitate to admit this. Impatience is too rare a virtue, it is true, but this does not dispense us from cultivating wisdom. A great deal has been won, and generally won by the middle class, for the oppressed workers. Between 1830 and 1880, at least, thousands of middle-class men were working

in Europe for the advance and enlightenment of the workers. The old doctrine of *laissez-faire* has been forced to compromise with decency. We have entirely abolished the horrible exploitation of cheap child-labour which was common early in the nineteenth century. Our Francis Places and Robert Owens have won for the worker the right to form Trade Unions, and others the free education of his children. We no longer permit the employer to fix the conditions and hours of labour as he wills. The cotton-worker of Manchester, labouring twelve or fourteen hours a day, and living in a squalid cellar, one hundred years ago, would be amazed if he could visit the factories and homes and places of amusement of his grandchildren. Even the poorer workers are no longer left to God and the clergy ; while the bulk of the workers have numbers of cheap luxuries which would have seemed an apocalyptic dream to the worker of Napoleon's day.

But let us not imagine that we have got our axe into the roots of poverty and are in a fair way to abolish it. This is one of the most dangerous fallacies of our age ; and against that comfortable assurance I, knowing well all that has been done, plead that not one of our reforms makes for the abolition or the material restriction of poverty. We pension the very aged worker and the still more aged widow : on the pauper scale. We build substantial, if rather cheerless, homes for the destitute, and we put warm, if ignominious, clothing

on the back of the orphan. We appoint minimum wages, and permit maximum prices. We have labour bureaux, and district visitors, and a Salvation Army, and a Church Army. All of which means that we give a drink to the crucified ; it might be well to study if we can cease to crucify.

The plain man or woman who earnestly wishes to help in the improvement of life will inquire first, and most resolutely, what the actual range and depth of poverty are ; will study, secondly, how far our measures of reform afford us any hope of curtailing it ; and will, in the third place, ask whether there is any other way of action which does offer some hope of restricting, if not removing, the evil.

In the mind of many people poverty means that somewhere in the darker depths of our cities, happily remote from the shopping centres, there are a number of people who, from lack of skill or excess of drink, cannot find regular employment, and must live. . . . One does not know exactly how they live, but certainly on unpleasantly short and dry rations. In earlier times one dropped a half-sovereign into the poor-box at church for these creatures, if they would come to church and learn resignation. To-day one subscribes to the Charity Organisation Society or the Salvation Army, or joins one of the many enterprising associations which are going to make the poor richer without making the rich poorer. We have a social conscience. We believe in *laissez-faire*, but, being humane, we will not push it to extremes. At the same time, being sensible

men, we are not going to push humanitarianism to extremes. The phrase-maker is the great benefactor.

For a first acquaintance with poverty I would recommend a man to spend a few hours, some Saturday evening, among those markets of the poor which still line many of our more dingy thoroughfares. As the night draws on, and the oil-lamps begin to flare and splutter over the stalls, the grim courts and narrow streets of the district discharge their grey streams of life upon the market. There is plenty of laughter, you observe; there are plenty of round-faced matrons, with clean, honest eyes and comfortable dress. "We ain't got much money, but we *do* live," I heard one of them remark, in an interval between bursts of raillery. The wives of regularly employed, and often not ill-paid, workers are there, as well as poorer folk. But study some of the quieter figures which move slowly among the throng or linger enviously before the cheap shops. Notice the puny, shrivelled infants, with quaint staring eyes, which, at the door of the public-house, lie lightly in the arms of women whose faces are bloated with drink and coarse food: the lean and ragged boys and girls, with hollow and prematurely sharpened eyes, who hang about the fruit-stalls, ready to dart upon the rotten castaways, or foster, in darker spots, the premature sex-development which will drain their scanty strength: the woman who, with drawn face, waits near the Red Lion to see how many

shillings her sodden brute of a husband will at length hand her for a week's shopping : the weary old couple who have seen better days, and now pass in silence through the babel of vulgarity : the haggard-faced widow in mouldy black who hides her paltry Sunday dinner in a worn bag : the eager eyes of the poorer hawkers, which light up pathetically when a penny comes their way : the men whose faces change at a drunken jibe into such faces as we have seen behind the bars of a cage in a zoological garden, and the crowd of men, women, and children rushing to enjoy the gratuitous spectacle of a fight : the cheap, middle-aged prostitute, whose features are a caricature of the features of woman.

You may see these things in all parts of London—north, south, east, and west—every Saturday evening, and many other evenings, all the year round. You may see them in all the other large towns and cities of Britain, and the cities of France and Germany and the United States and all other "great civilisations." I have studied them on Saturday nights in half the cities of Britain : in Amsterdam and Brussels and Cologne, in Paris and Nice, in Venice and Rome and Naples, in New York and Chicago : and in the light of our historical research one sees their ancestors in all the great cities of all the great civilisations that ever were. As it was in the beginning . . . But that refers to the glory of God.

Follow to their homes these more pathetic figures of a London crowd. You need not do so literally,

for more observant and sympathetic visitors have been there before you, and they told London long ago, as far as London was willing to hear, how the majority of its citizens live. Mr. Booth's book, *Life and Labour in London*, had better be suppressed when its work is done, lest the men and women of a more humane age learn too much about us; also Mr. Rowntree's book, which shows this same fetid poverty lying at the feet of a superb minster, the symbol of ages of ecclesiastical wealth and power; and many other books. Let me summarise the relevant record of the natural history of London.

We may begin with the lowest depth, with life as it is lived in some of the streets which still linger about Covent Garden, and in east and west and south. We are beginning to see the grim humour of tolerating the existence of these hotbeds of corruption under the very shadow of our marble palaces of justice and our marble hotels for millionaires, and we are destroying them; but the life remains still in sufficient quantity to fill a large town. In tenements of this order fifteen rooms out of twenty are indescribably filthy. Legions of bugs lurk by day behind the faded rags of ancient wall-paper or in the crevices of the unwashed floor, or even venture forth as securely as if they were conscious of free citizenship in these places. The "windows" are a rough mosaic of dirty glass and roughly plastered paper. The ceiling is pale black, the floor filthy. A table, one or two dilapidated chairs, a kind of bed—the "landlord" would, in

most cases, not raise two shillings on the lot—and an entire family of ragged, vermin-eaten human beings fill this foul box, which is often only eight or ten feet square.

These people are thieves, cheap prostitutes, hawkers, porters, charwomen, flower-sellers, ragmen—the most pitiful of the irregulars which we suffer, age after age, to live and breed and die beyond the extreme fringe of our industrial army. Sometimes they have nearly as much food to eat as a workhouse-idler : generally not. Drink—the vile mixtures of the cheaper public-house—they have more constantly ; and their children are not in their teens before they are familiar with all the vice and crime and brutality which seven out of ten of these rooms breed as naturally as they breed lice or bugs. In winter the doors and windows are sealed, and men, women, and children huddle together or, at times, crouch over a few lighted sticks. And year by year, century by century, babies are ushered into this underworld in edifying abundance, to live its ghastly life until the yellow frame and dull brain are worn out.

Shocking, you will say, but happily rare. Do you know that, according to the best authorities, 50,000 men, women, and children in London alone live in this atmosphere of squalor and brutality and chronic hunger ?

Let us pass to the next higher circle of the modern Inferno—the category of casual or very badly paid labour and chronic poverty, the makers of your

cheap furniture and clothes and brushes, your match-boxes and chocolate-boxes, the hawkers and costers and regular porters and dockers. Now there are generally two rooms to each family, but the vermin still thrive in more than half of them, and the rooms are filthy, and the children breathe an air that is foul with drink and cursing and the most open and gross sexuality : not now in fifteen cases out of twenty, it is true, but in ten cases out of twenty. Food is habitually insufficient, for labour is uncertain, and profit is infinitesimal ; and, as a man *must* drink, there are constant disturbances to break the monotony and help one to forget the customary hunger. You may have at times noticed the dejected hawker returning, on a wet summer's day, with his tomatoes unsold : or the children eager to collect fragments of the lids of orange-boxes in the winter. Countess Russell told me that she once visited, unexpectedly, a group of homes of this class, within a few minutes' walk of Gordon Square, in the depth of winter. Hardly any had the material for a fire, and few had food in the house. So they live, year in, year out ; and all that we propose to do is to give them five shillings a week each if they will sustain the burden honestly for six decades, or house and feed them in jail if they do not succeed in curbing their criminal impulses.

Once, in the Westminster Court, I saw a young and humane judge hand certain tickets to the jury, when they had established the guilt of two

petty criminals of this class. "These, gentlemen," he said, "are permits to inspect the jail; go some day and see the place to which you send criminals." A very wise and benevolent innovation, but we still await the judge who will send the jury to inspect the homes in which these men conceive crime.

About 400,000 citizens of the greatest city in the world belong to this class. If 400,000 do not constitute a sufficiently important problem, let us see the homes of the next category. These are the irregularly employed and badly paid, though not the worst paid, workers: costers, labourers, dockers, etc. There are about a million of them in London alone. They know quite well what hunger is: for weeks together, sometimes, the wage does not suffice to buy that minimum quantity of nitrogen and carbon which men of science have declared to be necessary, and the money is ill expended. They know what cold is, for many a hard spell of winter finds them in want. They have two or three rooms to each family, but, as a rule, not much of that "Christian reticence" on which our clergy congratulate us.

To the great majority of these million and a half of London's poor, sexual pleasure is the one cheap luxury; and we encourage them to breed industriously. My wife, with other ladies and gentlemen, addresses them on the subject from the tail of a cart in South London, and teaches the heavy-burdened mothers how to avoid having so many children; and the leader of this little group was

sourly and menacingly (and quite falsely) told by a distinguished Churchman, sitting in a Royal Commission, that they were breaking the law of the land. A friend of mine has been hounded out of the United States by the police for attempting to give similar information to the poorer mothers of New York.

Even in this third and very large category of London homes there is much filth ; and the windows, across which is drawn an odd cloth or a ragged and dirty curtain, abound in broken panes. They have periods of comparative plenty, when the children get boots and socks, and their elders soak in beer and may even venture to a cinematograph show, if the crude pictures on its garish façade promise a sufficiently silly or sufficiently bloody programme. All that the police and the clergy care about is that not more than an inch or two of underclothing are exhibited in these places. They have also periods of want, when the clothes go to the pawnshop, and life runs on the exasperating, brutalising lines of the lower class. The daily round of life is itself stupefying. At five or six they are dragged out of an insufficient sleep, and they dully take their tea (of a kind) and bread and margarine on a dirty table. After ten or twelve hours of anxious quest of minute profits they return home for a slightly better meal—a kipper, perhaps, or a few bits of cheap meat—too tired in mind and body to do more than smoke and drink. They have plenty of fun, of a sort, and take their tragedies lightly ; but the angels, if there

are any, must fold their wings over their faces at the aspect of these fellow-immortals. Even a politician might be expected to blush for this self-governing democracy. It is a squalid, degrading, stupefying life, below the level of civilisation.

Nearly one-third of the citizens of London do not rise above this level. The three classes that I have described, or the mass of people who spread continuously over these classes, were found by Mr. Booth to number 1,300,000 of the four and a half million inhabitants of the city. The figure for the Greater London of to-day is, of course, immensely higher. "The submerged tenth" is a most unfortunate phrase. It leads many, who know little of these matters, to suppose that only a tenth of the inhabitants of London are very poor. The truth is that a tenth live in a condition of misery, filth, and degradation of which the ordinary decent citizen can form no conception. They are the shirkers, the abnormal, and the worst casual workers. But the life of this further million—or nearly one-fourth of the total inhabitants of the Metropolis—the irregular or badly-paid workers, is a grave and accusing problem to every man of decent sentiment. Their condition is not consistent with civilisation. Certainly large numbers of them live clean and cheerful lives, but even in these cases it is scandalous that sober and willing toil should receive wage enough only to secure cleanliness and the necessities of life ; while a far larger number sink under the burden, and are dirty, intemperate, gross, and improvident.

Conceive the extension of this class all over Britain : the further vast contingents of this army of poverty in the slums of Glasgow and Liverpool and Manchester, in all our great manufacturing and shipping towns, even in the heart of pretty rural England, where the wretched wage and low standard and large family stunt and degrade our agricultural worker. It is a very serious error to imagine that this is merely an unhappy issue of the crowding in our great cities. In picturesque and highly respectable York Mr. Rowntree found that thirty per cent. of the citizens lived in very real poverty : that ten per cent. did not earn money enough to buy a normal and sufficient quantity of plain food, to say nothing of luxuries.

This is the problem of poverty. If you want it in figures, a fourth of the inhabitants of London, where rents are appalling, live on from eighteen to twenty-one shillings weekly per family, and some hundreds of thousands live on less than this. One might with some profit and pertinence go on to inquire into the life of the half of the population of London who are described as " comfortable workers." Whether the little luxuries they have are a fit reward for the hard work they usually do, whether there can be any development of distinctively human powers among them, whether we may cherish a feeling of entire security in basing our political system on that foundation, are questions worth putting ; and some day they will put them to us. But it is better for the moment to confine ourselves

to that pitiful fourth of the community which lives in degrading poverty because it has only irregular or wretchedly paid employment. Is it an exaggeration to suspect that this vast acreage of poverty will make the future historian hesitate to class us as civilised ?

Our social structure is of the nature of a pyramid. At its apex, glittering in the sun, calling forth our pride and praise, are culture and wealth and power, and all the fine things they bring into existence. At its base are the supporting stones, crushed into the soil by the towering mass : the millions of stunted or brutalised lives. I know both extremes of this social order, and I have felt, hundreds of times, that if it is permanently to retain this pyramidal form, the refined lives and great achievements of the few resting on this broad base of squalid and undeveloped lives, civilisation is an impossible dream. I have felt that, if men and women realised the full meaning and range of poverty, they would suspend the progress of art and science, of commerce and industry, for a hundred years, if need were, in order to concentrate the best intelligence of the race upon the search for the remedy of this vast disorder. And, if it be true, as I think, that these people, once dead, are dead for ever, and that the tradition of a hundredfold reward in heaven for their privations on earth is an illusion with which pastors and masters have reconciled them to their burdens, I would, if I could, send that assurance like a trumpet-blast through the slums of the world

and make this vast army of the stricken summon us, the intelligent minority, to a tardy judgment.

I do not, as will appear later, advocate the equal distribution of wealth. I do assuredly not plead that one who has wealth should give it to the poor : to see it gather again, perhaps, in less worthy hands. I add the contrast of wealth at this point only in order to make quite sensible the darkness of the life of millions. One's first task is to establish, with what faint power the pen has, the appalling magnitude of the evil. If any very large number of us did really grasp the human significance of these facts and figures, the industrial problem would not long be resigned, as it is, to bloodless economists and obscure propagandist bodies.

And the second aim of those who would see the world bettered is, as I said, to inquire into the effect of the remedies we actually trust and apply. Here we enter the mistier region of controversy, and I can but set out the grounds of my sincere convictions.

Of labour bureaux, in the first place, it will not be doubted that they are an advantage to employed and employers. They are an advance toward organisation. They bring the worker more promptly to the work that awaits him. But they, obviously, do not add one iota to the insufficient work, for which myriads are struggling : they do not add one penny to the wage that is earned : and they are of little or no service to the poorest workers, who chiefly concern us.

Old age pensions and insurance and free education are, similarly, great advantages to the workers, in which we may justly take some pride, but they do not promise to abolish or greatly diminish poverty. The pension, or the insurance benefit, is necessarily granted on the poverty scale, and is in some sense a recognition of it as one of the permanent institutions of life ; and the elementary instruction which we give has raised the qualifications for work, as well as the equipment, so that the proportion of unemployed, or ill-employed, is little changed. Nor would it be entirely wrong to say that, in relieving the poor man of the direct charge of education and insurance, we have put the difference on his rent.

Of our poor-law system, that lamentable compromise with a stupid old tradition, it is difficult to speak with patience. The able-bodied idlers of our workhouses and our countryside are a mockery of the workers. The tramp, the professional idler in search of idleness, maintained in his repulsive ways by an indiscriminating system of poorhousing and by a large body of "charitable" women, is one of the quaintest survivals of an older order. His father idled through life before him, and he in turn drags along the road a mate and children who will sustain the ignoble tradition. He ought to be washed, clothed, and put on an industrial estate ; and, if his disease prove incurable, he ought to be anæsthetised out of existence, or at least prevented from reproducing his like.

Then there are the emigration societies. One fears that in large part they transport to the colonies either the men whom the colonies do not want, the men who will enlarge the slum-area of colonial cities, or the men whom we ought not to spare. At the best, emigration is a means of leaving the problem of poverty to our grandchildren, who will find no more open spaces for the dumping of our human surplus. In point of fact, however, apart from the dispatch of a small proportion of specially prepared boys, emigration is not affecting our problem of poverty. The half-million very poor of London, with the corresponding hundreds of thousands in our other cities, do not make emigrants at all ; and very few of the next and far larger class are, or could be, fit for agricultural deportation.

Lastly of these devices which the less thoughtful are apt to regard as relieving poverty, we have the Salvation Army, which is quite the most preposterous social sham of our age. But its religious-social burlesque, its pretentious concealment of bad results and loud proclamation of good results, its refusal to print a plain balance-sheet from which a social student can measure the definite good done and the cost of it, its undercutting of existing work, and so on, have been sufficiently exposed to excuse us from dwelling on it. It contains some earnest men and women, and has had undoubted successes, but the system is too nebulous, garrulous, and wasteful to merit serious attention.

Let us turn to graver matters. The mass of the

workers, apart from the more advanced bodies of Socialists and Syndicalists, believe that the solution of the problem of poverty will be found in the development of Trade Unions and of the political power of Labour. By political power, with the aid of sympathetic members of the middle-class, they have won the right of combination and a whole code of labour-laws; by an increased political power, ultimately a political all-power, they will secure all the legislation they deem expedient.

In spite of the distraction of many of the workers by Anarchists and Syndicalists, who despise political action, and in spite of the restrictions of the franchise which are maintained by the older political parties, it seems plain that at some not very remote date the workers will control the world. Ever since the door of the political world was opened to Demos, eighty years ago, he was certain eventually to reach the throne, no matter how long he might be seduced to tarry by the way. Those who think otherwise must put their trust in the permanent unintelligence of the workers. The interests of the mass of workers are so far identical that they must finally combine to promote them. We are plainly moving, all over the world, in this direction. In Australasia, where the virgin soil permitted an exceptionally rapid growth, we see the farthest point yet reached, and within a decade or so Labour will have unshakable power all over Australia, at least. "Conservatism" has already disappeared, or changed its name to "Liberalism." In Germany and France

and Belgium we see the same disposition of the rival parties to unite in face of advancing Demos. In England there are signs that we shall at no distant date see a similar redistribution of political forces, and it is anticipated in the United States. In all countries the political energies are slowly gathering about two poles: Liberal (including the old Conservatives) and Labour. Even in such countries as Spain, Russia, Turkey, Japan, and China the initial stages of the development may be detected. When the workers at last unite and secure an absolute majority-power, they will legislate on familiar lines. Wages will rise, hours of labour will be shortened, and place will be found for larger numbers of workers.

It is little use moralising on this change. It is coming on like the tide. There will, no doubt, be temporary abuses of power, as there have always been, but the workers will learn the vital needs of an industrial order, and they will not starve the roots of their new prosperity. Let us assume that a state of equilibrium has been reached: that the workers have paramount political power, and wages are considerably increased. Does this promise a solution of the problem of poverty?

I am purposely leaving out of account the contemporary growth of rings and trusts. Paradoxical as it may seem to say so, they are not an essential element of the problem. The employers will (as is happening) form unions in face of the men's unions, and the strain laid on individual employers and small

companies will favour the growth of trusts. In so far as these make for economy, they are clearly useful ; but no doubt they will be tempted to use their monopoly to dictate arbitrary prices. When, however, the workers have a majority-power, they can either slay the trusts or draw their teeth. On the other hand, a beneficent or labour-saving trust will not afford any advantage to the less skilful workers, who make up the great army of the poor, and it will reduce prices only by an unimportant fraction. The chief significance of trusts is that they tend to annihilate the individualist employer, who was once considered an indispensable institution, and they may thus dispose obstinate admirers of the older industrial order to welcome a radical change. They are more deadly to the middle-class than to the working-class.

The really vital question is whether the raising of wages and reduction of hours, accompanied by a large amount of secondary legislation to the advantage of the worker, will solve *the* social problem : which is not the problem of the existence of a few thousand prostitutes, but the problem of the existence of, in every country, several million people who live in privation and squalor, and cannot develop human personalities. On this I offer two or three observations.

Does the price of commodities rise in proportion to the rise of wages ? If it does, the securing of a nominally higher wage is clearly a delusion. This seems, however, to be our experience. In England,

during sixty or seventy years of trade-combination, wages have risen, and hours and conditions of labour have been improved, to a remarkable extent, in spite of open competition in an overcrowded market. But prices and rents also have risen, and it is not clear that there has been a net advantage to the worker. It is very difficult to answer the question precisely, because other factors (such as the application of science) have increased the productiveness of labour and have cheapened certain commodities (books, clothes, pictures, tea, etc.). The workers have shared these advantages, and are in a position of far greater comfort than they were formerly. But in seriously testing the claim and promise of the Trade Unionist and the Labour politician we have to endeavour to subtract the improvement in the workers' condition which is due to the application of science, and of better methods, to production and distribution. When we make allowance for this, it is certainly not clear that the rise of wages shows a margin over the increased price of commodities: that, in other words, the higher wage is a real advantage.

It is difficult to see how it could be otherwise. When wages are raised, who pays the increment in the cost of production? The employer or the consumer? It is a familiar experience, and an inherent necessity of our industrial order, that the consumer does; and the consumer is the worker—the middle-class or wealthy consumer generally gets the difference in other ways. It would be bold to say that our

employers have paid even a fraction of the increased wage out of their own pockets. More usually they put a fifth of a penny on commodities when the worker has secured a sixth. Competition alone restrains them, and this is largely superseded by agreements. We have had innumerable instances of this during the war. Class after class of workers claimed a higher wage, and prices rose higher and higher "on account of the increased cost of production." If a Labour Government were to prevent employers from increasing the cost of commodities and raising rents in exact proportion to the demand for higher wages—were, in other words, to direct the employers to pay the increase of wage out of their own profits—we should soon see the end of this industrial order. The State would be compelled to become the employer.

This seems to be true of practically all the legislation which a political power of Labour could secure. Compensation, pensions, and insurance are typical instances. The new demand on the employer's profits is met in one of two ways: he withdraws voluntary contributions to these or similar purposes, or he raises the price of his goods. The larger consumer meets the burden by raising his rents or fees. The unreflecting worker imagines that "the country" pays for these things; he forms, in this respect, a larger proportion of the country than he thinks.

The second and more important consideration is that this power to dictate wages and pass measures

in favour of the workers does not hold out a prospect of absorbing that surplusage of labour which is our real problem. I am assuming that even the poorer and unskilled workers will have their unions and their share of the political power. Their wage will rise, and the price of their food and clothing and rooms will rise; but it is of greater consequence to reflect that the less competent workers on the fringe of the industrial army will receive little advantage. Some benefit they will certainly have, since the curtailment of hours and the slowing of the pace of production will make room for more workers in each industry; though we must remember that the pay of these new workers will either be taken from the older workers, whose hours are shortened, or—which comes to the same thing—will be put on the commodities. The total production will not be increased, and the employer will not relinquish his profit. In any case, even this method of finding room for more workers will affect relatively few.

Again I may quote the experience of Australia, where the workers have very great power. In Melbourne, alone, in 1913, I found 30,000 men unemployed; and there and in other cities the tainted area of poverty and distress was increasing. All the elaborate organisation and political power of the workers could not add to the sum of available work and thus absorb the surplus of labour. I am contending that until we do this we do not solve the poverty-problem. The chief cause of this appalling social disease is the inequality of natural

endowment—either of muscle or nerve—in face of an unorganised system of production. There is not work, with regular and decent wage, for all. The weaker, the lazier, the more drunken, and the slower of intellect, are crowded out of the ranks and driven to casual employment. This is the tap-root of poverty, and the benefits secured for those who are in regular employment will not affect it.

Thirdly, this labour-legislation will not touch the second chief root of poverty, the extreme inequality of the distribution of wealth. Since wealth is, in this regard, a fixed quantity,—we are not concerned here with the effect of fresh applications of science to production,—an accumulation of commodities at one point leads to thinness at another. I am not pleading for equality of income. Many workers have an exaggerated idea of the gain they might have by an equal distribution of wealth. The total annual income of the population of the United Kingdom is now believed to be about £2,400,000,000. If this were distributed equally amongst the heads of our ten million families and our large army of unmarried workers, the result would be barely £200 a year; and the equalisation of taxation, the granting of substantial pensions, etc., would further reduce it. There is, however, no serious need to discuss this idea. I see no moral principle which forbids that we should reward a man according to his productiveness or inventiveness or other value to the community, although his fellows are not

responsible for their lesser capacity; and it is idle to speculate on some imaginary phase of human development in which the more gifted and more useful will refuse to be more richly rewarded than the less useful.

But it does not follow that the community has no right to control the distribution of wealth. At one time such a proposal would have been branded "robbery." To-day even Conservatives do not threaten to remove the death-duties and graduated income-tax by which we confiscate some of the wealth of the more fortunate. The only question is, to what *extent* we may or ought to prevent the excessive accumulation of wealth, or to disperse it after accumulation.

There occur at once two methods of enrichment which invite careful attention. One is the power to transmit wealth to one's descendants in perpetuity, or until they choose to dissipate it. Most of us will admit that in a social order at all resembling our own—and I do not care to speculate about utopian or imaginable orders—the power to win advantages for one's children as well as for oneself is a sound incentive to work. But the wish to relieve one's descendants of the need to work, to make them for ever a burden on the community, is a perverse ideal. It is one of those unsound primitive traditions which we detect in the actual stream of our ideas and sentiments, and instances are not unknown in our time of such holders of hereditary wealth revolting against the tradition.

When we realise that this inherited wealth means, in plain terms, the right to have a hundred or a thousand fellow-men working for us or our descendants in perpetuity, for no merit or service on our part, and when we consider the folly and waste which so commonly follow large inherited fortunes, we must regard this tradition as evil and indefensible. One wonders how long the working community is going to sustain this burden, and how long refined men and women will imagine that they have a right to live like Oriental potentates because they had a shrewd or a gifted ancestor.

It is sometimes said in their favour that they employ labour with their wealth. I have heard bishops give them this foolish consolation. As if the wealth would cease to exist, and to employ labour, if it were in the pockets of a thousand men, instead of the pockets of one Duke of Norfolk or Duke of Westminster ! The only difference would be that this wealth, instead of paying a thousand servants and tradespeople to work for the comfort of one family, would pay a thousand men, who would lose nothing by the change of employment, to produce comfort for a thousand families. Meantime, the Duke is embarrassed by his wealth, or spends it on superfluous things, and the thousand families live in vicious misery. Their babies die for lack of good milk in the hot summer, and the rich youth or maiden—I have known this done—carelessly takes a bath of milk. Let us understand

clearly this economic truth: great wealth is the accumulation in one man's hands of the right or power of a thousand families to employ labour.

The second source of wealth which invites consideration is the unearned increment on ground-values, or any other unearned and accidental increase of value. It is now very commonly admitted that this belongs to the community, and I need not enlarge on it.

We have, as I said, admitted the community's right to interfere with this scandalous clotting of wealth, and no doubt a Labour-majority would increase death-duties until money could not be transmitted beyond, at most, the third generation, and not in quantities sufficient to make men and women a lifelong burden on the working community. Possibly some day there will be a general scrutiny of titles to wealth: not merely as far back as the enclosure of the commons a hundred years ago, but back to the landing in this country of William of Normandy. Possibly a day will come when men and women will conceal the fact that their ancestors "came over with the Conqueror," since it generally implies that the descendants of those lucky adventurers have not done an honest day's work since that time. Possibly the sons of some of our "captains of industry" of a century ago will burn the family records, lest some prying historian should learn by what horrible exploitation of child-labour the fortune was made. Prescriptive right is a purely artificial right created

by the community, and it may be withdrawn by the community.

Such measures as these a Labour Government will, no doubt, eventually take, and they will do much to relieve poverty and increase the production of commodities of general use. But they will add rather to the comfort of workers who are already above the poverty-line, and they will not prevent an excessive accumulation of wealth, though they may finally disperse it. This means the continuance of deep poverty. As long as a gifted man may amass a fortune in a comparatively short time, without adding to the wealth of the community, there will be squalid poverty somewhere.

In sum, if the political ideal of Labour were fully realised, it would not put an end to, and might not very materially lessen, our widespread poverty. It would not enlarge the amount of available productive employment, and so the weak in body or mind or character would still form a pitiable army of slum-dwellers. It would, having no more control of industry than the present Parliament has, be unable to meet any grave disturbance of the industrial world, such as the release of hundreds of thousands of workers by disarmament. It would have no power to secure for the workers their full share of the advantage of any new application of science, and it would be unable to guide into new positions the men displaced by this application. We should continue to suffer the disadvantage of an imperfectly organised industrial system; each

new enlistment of the great forces of nature or of the cunning of science in the service of man would enrich a few and impoverish many. In order to meet all these grave difficulties—in order to do more than secure certain advantages for the better equipped workers—a Labour Power would be forced radically to alter its principle and undertake the organisation of employment.

This organisation of industry seems to be the only device which will gradually restrict, and finally abolish, poverty. The opposition to it of middle-class workers and of so many artisans is unintelligible. It is time that we ceased to confine the term "workers" to the poorer and less cultivated caste among those who work : time that the lawyer and actor and housewife claimed that honourable title no less than the carpenter or navvy. In restricting the term to manual and badly paid workers we have concealed from ourselves the real community of interest of all who work. All of us, except those who live on the labour of others, have an interest in the proper organisation of the work of the world and the removal from our shoulders of this intolerable burden of the irregular workers and the idlers. The middle-class has an even greater interest than what is narrowly called the working-class, because the tendency of Labour-legislation is, and will increasingly be, to put the heavier charge, not on large employers, who easily evade it, but on the middle-class generally. Here again the war has luminously illustrated our

position. Both employers and employed (in the current industrial sense) have made great profit by it: the middle-class generally has suffered severely. A proper organisation of work would have prevented this.

It can easily be shown that this national organisation of employment, with graded incomes according to service rendered, is the only remedy of poverty. The chief root of poverty is, as I said, the insufficiency of properly paid work, and this is entirely due to the haphazard and unsystematic nature of our industrial order. The private employer looks only to the actual demand of commodities, or to the actual funds for buying commodities. He has no interest in the moneyless unemployed; indeed, he finds it a convenience to have a large number from which he may select his workers. As a result, a large proportion of our people are unable to demand their normal share of commodities because they are not employed, or because they have no wage; and they are not employed because they do not demand commodities. Plainly, the community alone can alter this paradoxical state of things; and, since the community is now compelled by its more humane sentiments to carry the poor on its shoulders, it may at length be induced to see that it would be better to set them on their own feet. In a properly organised industrial system a worker will be paid by the commodities which he or she actually produces, or their exchange-value. There can be no such thing as a superfluous worker.

It is only a lamentable issue of our perverse pre-scientific system that millions must lack the food and clothing and luxuries which they themselves could and would, under a more orderly system, produce.

This implies, of course, the transfer to the community, at a just payment, of the land, the mines, and the means of transit, and the gradual extension of municipal enterprise to productive and distributive industries. I am contending only for principles, and would refer the closer inquirer to such detailed constructive works as those of Mr. H. G. Wells. It would be futile to construct a rigid scheme of collectivist organisation. Such industries as the press, literature, art, etc., present difficulties which it would be foolish to override. But these affect comparatively few workers, and it is pedantry of an unintelligent kind to wrangle over them while we have a clear case in regard to other industries which involve many millions of workers. We would do well, however, to remember that the middle-class industries themselves are overcrowded and chaotic, and that most members of that class would gain by organisation, wherever it is possible. Instead of shrinking from it and inventing difficulties, we ought to be eager to discover its possibilities.

I ignore also certain more or less academic objections which have been made against this proposal to organise employment. Mill's essay *On Liberty* is a monument of the futility of this kind of reasoning.

Mill was a civil servant, and, except in the case of the idle and criminal, no restriction of individual liberty is proposed other than that which Mill cheerfully endured. Middle-class men are apt to take fright at the word "Socialism." It ought to be by this time generally known that half a dozen very different theories pass under that name, and it is particularly unintelligent to confuse the extreme and the moderate proposals. Nearly the whole of the employment in any civilisation could be organised without laying on any who are willing to work a greater restraint than is laid on officials of the postal service. As to "confiscation," it will be gathered from an earlier page that I favour generous compensation to actual holders of land or mines, but no perpetual pensions.

I do not anticipate from this change all the advantages which some Socialist writers expect. Their schemes of high universal prosperity seem to me to have an absurdly slender basis of actual work. Mr. William Morris conjectured that if all of us were to work for four hours a day there would be enough produced for all of us to live in luxury ; whereas Mr. Sidney Webb calculates that it would need six hours' work a day, on the part of all, to produce the necessaries of life. It is true that a very large body of middlemen, commercial travellers, footmen and other servants, and duplicate workers in rival industries would be set free for sound productive or distributive or professional work ; but the easing of the hours of our actual workers, the removal of

the young from the market, and other collateral improvements, must be taken into account. If we take one hour a day from the actual workers in our heavier industries, we absorb at once more than a million new men without increasing production. In any case, it is lamentable to dangle before the eyes of men the ideal of working only four hours a day. We want more of Browning's gospel of work with cheerfulness. No doubt the idea is that, if the hours of labour are reduced, the leisure will be employed in reading Bergson and mastering Brahms. This optimistic theory seems to be at variance with our experience. Improvement of financial position more usually means the substitution of Bass or Dewar for cheap ale, and of stalls for the gallery at the variety theatre. A later chapter will, however, discuss our interests in this connection.

The fact remains that collectivism is the only remedy of poverty. The redistribution of wealth, or the prevention of excessive wealth, would, in my view, add comparatively little to the wages of the millions; and we must not put to the credit of an economic scheme the profit of such changes as disarmament. It is not this, but the note of efficiency, organisation, and economy which appeals to me in the Socialist ideal. It would abolish a vast amount of duplicate and unnecessary work, and it would conduct to their proper place in the industrial order the large army of casual workers. London or New York is a colossal monument of industrial inefficiency. Our chaotic mass of dupli-

cate and triplicate rival grocers, bakers, butchers, etc., our rival railways and other purveyors and producers, with their separate staffs and their appalling waste in advertisement, are a reproach to our intelligence. We want an orderly and economical system both of production and distribution, and only the municipality (or else a vast and tyrannical trust) can conduct it. Most of all we want a power that will sweep the myriads of costers, hawkers, newspaper-youths, flower-girls, casual porters, loafers, musicians, etc., off our streets, and put them to productive work. We want a great curtailment of certain luxury-industries and fictitious industries. This would give us an immensely increased volume of productive work, and a great saving in distribution. The middle-class has not less to gain than the workers by such a scheme of organising our resources, and it offers us the only confident prospect of abolishing poverty and crime and gradually uplifting the mass of the people.

Naturally, we should for a long time have to deal with a great deal of refractory material. Idleness and crime are diseases, and they ought to be treated by the methods of modern medicine: scientific, humane, sometimes surgical. Certainly we would exercise "tyranny" in dealing with these. Probably in a properly ordered society all citizens would be enrolled in an industrial register. The hypersensitive would have the same guarantee of privacy as under our income-tax system, and the police

would have a most effective means of locating the criminal. Any who were permanently refractory, or showed an incurable disposition to revert to crime or to the vagrant industries which disgrace our cities to-day, would have no moral right to burden us with their existence. The community would offer work and sufficient wage to all. The rest might disappear into segregated "homes of idleness," or, if we are as wise as we ought to be, into lethal chambers.

This incurably refractory group would, however, probably prove smaller than many believe. We are at present a little too much inclined to consult scientific theorists about heredity (which is still very obscure in science) and too little inclined to make social experiments. I am assuming that a dozen other reforms would proceed simultaneously with the reform of industry. Education would no longer confine itself to giving an elementary literacy to children, without any further care what use they make of their literacy; it would, as I will suggest later, seriously concern itself with the adult population. A bolder treatment of the housing question would stimulate those who have evil traditions; we should not confine ourselves to building clean rooms for them, which they might make filthy if they wished. Prudential restriction of the birth-rate would be impressed on the poorer class, with great benefit to themselves and their children and the State. Eugenic proposals might be practically formulated and encouraged. We should not expect

industrial betterment to have some mystic or magical effect of itself in uplifting the mass of the people; but, until this betterment occurs, other efforts to help them will be seriously hampered or entirely futile. The very magnitude of the task would prove a magnificent tonic and stimulation to the jaded mind of the community.

An increasing number of middle-class men and women now recognise that this is, not merely the only solution of the problem of poverty, but the most profitable scheme of national life for all who are willing to work. So detached an observer as Mr. Carveth Read, professor of Philosophy at London University, observes that "probably the future lies either with Co-operation or with Socialism" (*Natural and Social Morals*, p. 211). On the Continent, especially in Italy, France, Holland, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, and Russia, there is a high proportion of cultivated and professional men in the Socialist movement. No one need fear its advance except the idler and the man whose work does not add to the wealth of the community or facilitate its distribution. It is the application of sound and tried business-principles to national life; and, when those principles have first been applied to the governmental machine, and made it an effective and disinterested administration, we shall move more quickly toward the Collectivist ideal.

Some may wonder that a student of science should come to this conclusion. There is a vague idea

abroad that an individualist struggle for existence and survival of the fittest is the supreme and unalterable law of life. This idea, though encouraged by men like Mr. Kidd, is due to a merely superficial acquaintance with biology. In past ages nature has certainly evolved higher types mainly by a bloody struggle of individuals or a very calamitous pressure of environment. *In the past*: there is the limit of the teaching of biology. A new thing—human intelligence—has now entered the life of the earth, and it has in countless ways superseded the laws (that is to say, practices) of unconscious nature. The human mind is now a part of nature, and therefore “natural selection” is a wholly different matter from what it once was. Maurice Maeterlinck has suggested this with his usual felicity. He imagines himself on a hill, from which he sees two watercourses stretching toward the sea. One meanders over the plains, wasting time and space, blindly finding its way over the uneven ground: that is the old, unintelligent method of nature. The other waterway stretches straight across the landscape, a canal cut by man in the course of a few years, with no waste of ground: it is the new, intelligent method of nature. By this method we now create new species of plants in a thousandfold less time than natural selection (in the usual sense) could do; and we do it precisely by dispensing with the individualist struggle, by intelligent arrangement and control.

Early science set up unintelligent nature as a

grand model for man. It is time we outgrew this phase of infancy. Intelligence must increasingly count in the life of the earth. We first organise a nation, and presently we shall organise international life. We organise particular businesses, and presently we shall organise the whole industrial life of the planet. There is no part of human life which calls more urgently for the application of intelligence than this disordered, wasteful, pitiless, poverty-saturated industrial world of ours. Let us treat human beings at least as intelligently as we treat our flowers, and as humanely as we treat our horses. We do not entrust those to the tragedy of struggle and survival. We need not fear that there will be any restriction of the development of personality. Under such a Collectivist system as I have in mind, personality will be developed until every man and woman is conscious of his or her share in the control of the destinies of this planet, and the sheep-like respect for ancient traditions and abuses, which impedes our progress to-day, will be for ever abolished.

CHAPTER VI

IDOLS OF THE HOME

AMONG the claims of reconstruction which the insurgent literature of our time puts forward, none, perhaps, so startles and inflames the Conservative as the demand for a reform of the family. Criticism of this institution is, in fact, so severely punished or so slanderously misrepresented that it is usually exercised in the more or less impersonal form of the drama or novel. It happens, however, that the drama or the novel is now quite the most effective means of inoculating millions with critical ideas, and at least half the more brilliant novelists and dramatists of Europe employ their art for this purpose, or reflect some such sentiments in their work. Hence the outcry about the "unclean novel": which is usually far cleaner than the Old Testament, but more critical. Positivism had assured us that this institution would be transferred intact to a human foundation, and Murillo's "Holy Family" hung reverently over the hearths of the new pagans. Now, half in fear and half in exultation, the clergy cry that humanism has betrayed its moral poison and its social menace.

Our favourite phrase here is the saying that the family is the foundation of the State. If one patiently considered the matter, one would discover that the divine right of kings was once regarded with equal confidence as the indispensable foundation of the State. It may very well be that the divine duty of the family is no less open to reconsideration. It might be noticed that the change from aristocracy to democracy was at one time hailed with lurid prophecy even by distinguished moralists and sociologists, yet this change has led to greater efficiency and prosperity. We might perceive that the Christian dogmas were once thought vital to our welfare, and it may be that the Christian ethic is in some points as disputable as the Christian dogmas. Few reflect on these matters, and the writer who criticises the family is denounced with peculiar bitterness. Quite certainly that tomb of dead civilisations yawns ominously before us if we lend ear to this kind of rebel. The family is so plainly indispensable an institution that it must be protected from criticism : lest we be tempted to dispense with it.

I propose, however, to make a critical study of the family. Indeed, I venture to say at once that our ideal of the family is so encrusted with ancient superstitions that it pressingly invites the critical attention of our age : that the family is the foundation of the State only in an historical sense, not in the sense that a State cannot be based on any other procreative arrangement : and that the cloak of

superstition and rhetoric that we have put about it has covered for ages, and still covers, an appalling amount of vice, hypocrisy, and misery. My point of view has been stated. The affairs of this planet must be run by men for men. The supreme aim must be to lighten the burden of suffering which we inherit from a less intelligent and less humane past. Any creed, code, or institution which forbids progress on these lines must be assailed.

The first and most damnable superstition in regard to the family is the claim that marriage ought to be indissoluble. In its strict form this belief is held only by Roman Catholics, and by a section of the Church of England which was only partially reformed in the sixteenth century and has a strange ambition to disavow even that limited reform. But the most insidious mischief of this old ideal is that it has embedded deep in our minds the feeling that, although indissoluble marriage is an intolerable yoke, we must be very chary and niggardly in granting relief. This feeling we ascribe to a wise concern for our social welfare, whereas it is due to the subconscious tyranny of the old superstition. Recently we have seen the strange spectacle of a non-Christian moralist standing amongst our bishops to bar the way of reform: seeking to prolong, in the name of humanity, a superstition that darkens the homes of a large part of humanity. The bishops may have smiled.

A distinguished sociological writer, Mr. L. Hobhouse, in classifying forms of marriage, says, with

unconscious humour: "Marriage is indissoluble among the Andamanese, some Papuans of New Guinea, at Watubela, at Lampong in Sumatra, among the Igorrotes and Italones of the Philippines, the Veddahs of Ceylon, and in the Romish Church." One trusts that the Roman (and Anglican) Catholics like the company they keep; the peoples enumerated by Mr. Hobhouse are the very lowest and least intelligent savages known to science. The Church of Rome has long boasted that its ideal of indissoluble union is the final and culminating point of human wisdom in regard to the family. It now appears that indissoluble marriage was the most primitive human tradition, and was discarded by the Roman and all other civilisations when they passed from childhood to manhood.

Sociologists have been accustomed to say that monogamy was gradually developed out of promiscuity. This was mere speculation, and Professor Westermarck and other recent authorities rightly dissent. The institution is older than humanity. We find monogamic family life among the anthropoid apes and amongst the lowest peoples, which represent early man; and many writers on prehistoric man now contend that we find him passing from family to social life, not in the reverse way. When the last Ice Age forced men to live in caves, and the scattered families clung together and formed large social groups, the family life was modified, and few of the higher tribes maintained the primitive form. Réclus tells of a Khond who,

on hearing of the monogamous life of the wild Veddahs of Ceylon, exclaimed in disgust: "They live like the apes."

We may assume that little hardship arises from incompatibility of temperament among the Igorrotes or the Veddahs, and there is no need to describe the eccentric forms of marriage which arose among higher savages. None of the great civilisations of the past entertained the idea of indissoluble marriage. The clergy, of course, know nothing of the real line of evolution, and (as Bishop Diggle has done) they represent the Roman system as a comparative refinement of early promiscuity, on which Christianity was to make the final advance. The precious testimony of Juvenal is invoked (against the warning of all modern historians): and we are expected to shudder because St. Jerome tells us of a Roman lady who had been married a score of times. It is not stated what harm was done to the lady, or to anybody else, or whether she was a freak in her generation. It is enough, as Mrs. Humphry Ward knows, to say that divorce is frequent anywhere, and thousands of hands will rise to heaven: what the precise social consequences are the thousand of heads seem to regard as irrelevant.

I have read most of the literature of the Roman Imperial period, and have found that the greater part of the statements made about it by clerical moralists are rubbish. Every serious student knows that it was precisely the more rigid and intolerable

earlier form of Roman marriage (the *confarreatio*) which led to laxity in the early Empire ; that the Roman Lawyers of the first and second centuries, who relaxed marriage, were among the most conscientious that the legal world has ever produced ; and that in the time of St. Jerome—an embittered and intensely puritanical priest, who says worse things about his sacerdotal colleagues than he does about the pagans—we have the solid testimony of such documents as the *Letters* of Symmachus and the instructive *Saturnalia* of Macrobius to show that the family life of the pagans was generally healthy, sober, and harmonious. There is not a particle of proof that Roman society suffered because of the facility of divorce, or generally abused this facility.

But the misrepresentation of Roman morals is light in comparison with the misrepresentation of later Christian morals. Christianity took its ideal from the Jews. Amongst this partially civilised people marriage had been made easy for the male by the retention of polygamy, and it was not customary to consult the feelings of the woman. In the course of time Greek influence entered Judæa, and the Rabbis held learned debates on marriage and divorce. Both the stricter and the laxer view found expression in the New Testament and in early Christian literature, but a celibate priesthood obtained supreme power in Europe and the stricter view was enforced. The moral consequences were disastrous. While the Roman *Curia*, which could

always find a flaw in the marriage of a wealthy man, was enriched, Europe was degraded, and sexual immorality became general. It is enough to recall that a tradition of looseness, in strict correspondence with the law of indissoluble marriage, survives from the ages of faith to our own time in the Latin countries. Some have spoken of "the hot southern blood" and cast the blame on the climate. I would invite the informed moralist to run his eye over the map of the earth, and ask himself whether chastity increases, or the sex-organs lose vitality, in proportion as nations are removed from the Equator. It is a ludicrous effort of Catholics to conceal the evils of indissoluble marriage. Until the Reformation sexual laxity was the same all over Europe.

In England the old priest-made law was retained after the Reformation, and laxity of morals was general. Except for a very few wealthy people, divorce was impossible until 1857, when a slender measure of reform was wrested from the clergy. This, the present law of England, a miserable compromise with religious prejudice and a permanent source of vice and misery, puts English legislation on an important aspect of "the foundation of the State" below that of any other civilised community. Instead of ridding themselves entirely of clerical influence, and directing civic life on civic grounds, our legislators looked still to ancient Judæa, and substituted the less stringent view of the Rabbis for the more stringent. The legendary leader of a

rude Arab tribe had granted divorce for adultery, and the English nation of the nineteenth century followed his example. The result was the most stupid and mischievous law of marriage outside the sphere of the Holy Catholic Church.

English people are proud of their national concern for purity, yet they tolerate, and their priests defend as something sacred, a state of law which is medieval in its crudeness and barbarity. When two people have obeyed our counsel to marry early, and they discover that they have misjudged each other, we tell them that there is no relief for them unless they commit adultery: which, when it is committed, we brand as the darkest sin. To the husband we give the further injunction that he must be cruel to his wife before we will release him. We then, although we take especial pride in the "cleanness" of our press and literature, print whole columns about their conduct in suspicious situations,—sometimes entitling the account, in large type, to attract attention, "A Horrible Case,"—and we ask each other whether England is not in a state of decay and contracting the continental spirit. If there are any who do not choose to commit adultery, or do not choose to have their servants bribed to describe their conduct for the entertainment of the public, we grant them a legal permit to be happy and vicious, or miserable and virtuous, for the remainder of their lives: the thing we call a judicial separation.

This extraordinary situation is certainly a slight

improvement on indissoluble marriage, but the pride of our bishops and puritans in it is peculiar. One may not expect them to take into account the suffering which hundreds of thousands endure under the law, but the adultery to which it leads would seem to be a proper subject for their consideration. As a rule, they entreat us to maintain religion, whether it be true or no, in the name of morality : here they ask us to maintain immorality in the name of religion,—in the name of a supposed Christian precept,—and we obey even more readily. When a Royal Commission recommends that our law be brought into line with the law of other civilised nations, they burn with indignation and inspire a Minority Report : a remarkable mixture of contradictions, worthless quotations, and irrelevant rhetoric. The question of immorality they shirk ; and to the unhappiness which large numbers of our people endure under the present law they are so insensitive that they hardly mention it.

Such consequences are to be expected as long as we borrow our social legislation from an ancient polygamous nation with a great disdain for women. It is said, however, as usual, that our social interest coincides with the supposed command of Christ. We have here one of the most singular confusions of the whole controversy. Marriage is held to be the foundation of the State, because it is believed to be the surest way to supply it with citizens. This duty of procreation is, in fact, the only feature which disposes priests to give their blessing to so

distasteful a thing as sexual union. Yet when a majority of the Commissioners recommend that people should be free to remarry if the desertion, cruelty, insanity, or imprisonment of one spouse defrauds the State of its supply of little citizens, the bishops raise their crosiers. Even so ascetic and anti-feminist a divine as St. Augustine could not deny that a man had a right to take a concubine when his wife proved sterile. Our divines speak much more fervently than St. Augustine did of our social interest, yet they forbid us to consult it.

In sum, we have generally rejected the view that marriage ought to be indissoluble, and we pride ourselves on curbing the influence of priests; but our whole attitude toward divorce is shaped by the old superstition and the clergy. In the name of that superstition we condemn large numbers of our fellow-citizens to live in deep and acute misery. Which of our social interests would be prejudiced by granting relief to the man or woman whose life is embittered by the desertion, incurable insanity, cruelty, or criminal conduct of his or her partner? The suggestion is preposterous; and, if we do not grant this relief, adultery is in their case a venial offence, if not a right.

Some explain that they fear "the thin edge of the wedge." As if wedges had a way of pressing deeper by their own weight, once we have admitted them! If England chooses to grant these reforms, and no others, she need not be deterred by empty phrases. But I believe that the alert and resolute

race which is coming will go much further than this. Before many generations, if not in ours, there will be divorce for incompatibility of temperament in every civilised country. Men and women will be divorced, after due delay, because they wish, or when one of them can show grave cause to separate from the other. Ill-informed people express a concern about the children or the social consequences. They do not take the trouble to inquire what happens in some of the American States, or in Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland, where there is long and ample experience of divorce by mutual consent. The social consequences are just what any unprejudiced person would expect: happier homes, and more healthily engendered and reared children. But the puritan does not want to inquire: he is not sincere. Would he agree to divorce by mutual consent where there are no children or where either or both parents make adequate provision for them? He would not. I will, however, return later to the question of children.

Europe will be far happier when some such humane law as the Danish is generally adopted, and, after a few years' separation, the discontented are free to remarry. But no one who is acquainted with the tendency and influence of modern literature can fancy that this will be the last state of the old ideal of the family. From the first years when men were free to declare their opinions without fear of the stake, writers of great power have claimed the right of what has come to be called "free love."

Some would abolish marriage, but the normal shape of the demand is that men and women shall be free to love and beget children whether or no they ask the blessing of Church or State. By the latter part of the eighteenth century, when Goethe took a concubine on the pagan model, many of the first literary men in Europe pressed this demand, and it is sustained by some of the most brilliant writers in every country to-day. The movement exhibits the slow and steady growth characteristic of reforms which eventually triumph. It is no mere bubble on the surface of our effervescent life ; it is the new intelligence of the race examining the old traditions.

Moralists, lay and clerical, have a preposterous way of representing this as a *surging* of selfish passion against the barriers which human experience or superhuman wisdom has erected. There is, it is true, much in our rebellious literature itself which misrepresents the movement. You get the impression that, as the eighteenth century questioned the divine right of kings and the nineteenth century that of priests, the twentieth century is challenging the divine right of moralists. But this is due to the common practice of giving a narrow meaning to the word "immorality." Goethe and Swinburne became zealous for "morality," but they never altered their opinions on "free love." Sudermann and Anatole France and Perez Galdòs and d'Annunzio, G. B. Shaw and T. Hardy and E. Carpenter and H. G. Wells, are sincere moralists : they inculcate honour, truthfulness, kindness,

and justice as firmly as our bishops, and more effectively than most of our clergy. It is not morality that stands at the bar. The real question is whether any sound moral principle implies that marriage alone sanctions sex-union: whether social good or social evil would result from an alteration of our standards.

This is a quite natural and legitimate question, and any healthy-minded person ought to be able to discuss it without hysteria or vituperation. Christian moralists have made some very grave mistakes during the last thousand years. Humility and disdain of the flesh were for centuries extolled by them as the supreme virtues: cruelty was classified as a venial offence. Already the bulk of our divines reject the virtue of asceticism, and they forbear to press on the modern world the kind of humility which turns the other cheek, or the other pocket, to the hooligan. They discover that social justice has been singularly neglected by their predecessors, and they begin to suspect that war or sweating may be worse than unbelief or Sabbath-breaking. It is not at all unnatural to inquire whether there may not also be some element of error in their sex-ethic.

We do not go far in such an inquiry before our suspicion is confirmed. The evolution of the virtue of chastity may some day be traced by a cold scientific investigator, and in its earlier stages it will prove extremely interesting. It is primarily connected with an ancient superstition or "tabu"

in regard to sex-life: the kind of primitive and unreasoning feeling which once drove women to the temples of Ishtar in parts of the East, and still survives, baldly and ludicrously, in the "purification" process to which a recent mother must submit in the Roman and Anglican Churches. This old idea that there was something "unclean" or mysterious about sex-life, was more or less discarded when men passed out of the barbaric stage, but it quite evidently survived in part in the virtue of purity. A man or woman, it was thought, had a certain mystic superiority if he or she did not use the organs of sex. Hence the widespread veneration of Vestal Virgins, Pythagorean and Serapean recluses, priestesses of Isis, Aztec and Christian nuns. I call attention particularly to the notion that these celibates were in some sense superior to their fellows, because it shows clearly the connection with the older idea of a mystic uncleanness about sex. There is, of course, no rational ground for this superstition, though even philosophers have entertained it. There is a large and elegant literature about it, from the *Enneads* of Plotinus to Bulwer Lytton's *Zanoni* or the works of Miss Corelli.

Most of us see quite clearly the barbaric strain lingering in this admiration of virginity, but we do not perceive how far our virtue of purity is a compromise with this ancient superstition. I mean that, together with sound elements which I will discuss presently, the sentiment of purity or chastity

retained a good deal of the old irrational view of sex. Luther boldly attacked the theoretical asceticism of the medieval Church, but in the end Protestantism compromised with the old tradition. This again is quite plainly seen when we reflect on the way in which Church people, and many of our modern mystics and feminists, breathe the word "lust." It means merely pleasure in sexual intercourse, but it has to be mentioned as rarely as possible, and with downcast eyes and an air of very distinct disapproval. The impression is conveyed that it is a thing invented by the devil, but reluctantly permitted by the Almighty because the race had to be maintained. The blessing of the Church made it a barely permissible luxury. We have only to reflect that "lust" does not mean unwedded love, but sexual pleasure or desire under any conditions, to recognise the trail of the old tabu over the whole range of these sentiments.

In the nineteenth century the evolution of morals took a strange turn. Neither clergy nor laity had before that time, speaking generally, observed chastity in practice, but the rise of non-Christian critics in the eighteenth century had compelled the clergy to be more faithful to their own precepts. This (and the growth of such movements as Wesleyanism) led to more concern about virtue, and when the English Agnostic school arose its leaders were taunted by the clergy with a wish to rationalise or alter morality. By a natural reaction they cultivated a particular zeal for virtue, and accepted the

old code in its entirety. Those moralists who appealed to a "categorical imperative" or an "intuition" had no difficulty in doing this. Indeed, any man who to-day accepts the Stoic idea of morality, or the æsthetic idea (that virtue is so beautiful that we must cultivate it), has as much right as the Christian to profess a regard for chastity. There ensued a kind of rivalry of virtue between the clergy and the new pagans. It has ended in the curious spectacle of our modern clergy, whose historical knowledge is both slender and peculiar, claiming that their Churches are the most faithful preachers of purity the world has ever known, while Agnostic moralists indignantly dispute their supposed monopoly.

The extreme complexity of this evolution, and the fact that few of us reflect critically at all on our moral sentiments, must excuse me for making this lengthy analysis. It shows that our conception of chastity still contains a large amount of the old non-rational tradition, and that any man or woman who declines (as so many do to-day) to bow to mystic and obscure commands has a right to examine it closely. In one of my works (*Life of G. J. Holyoake*, ii. 65) I have shown that so sensitive a moralist as J. S. Mill admitted this. Obviously, the precept of purity or chastity has a totally different basis from all the other recognised moral precepts. These others are invariably social laws, and the transgression of them is invariably a social hurt. Life itself furnishes the reply if a man asks

why he *ought* to be just, kind, and truthful: the answer is not so obvious when he asks why he *ought* to be chaste.

This will become very much clearer if we examine our resentment of "immoral" actions. In the majority of cases we condemn them on moral principles quite apart from chastity. Europe has in this respect been lamentably misled by its professional moralists, and we can hardly be surprised that in practice it so largely ignored them. It is quite plain that a man or woman who has married on the usual terms—mutual fidelity—and they remain unaltered, is bound by honour and justice to observe the contract. Adultery is in such a case (the usual case) condemned by moral principles which have a very much clearer basis than chastity. Again, justice sternly forbids a man to inflict, or run the risk of inflicting, grave injury on a woman by causing her to have a child in a social order which will heavily punish her for doing so. Here also there is a firm reason, apart from chastity, for moral resentment. When we eliminate these other moral sentiments from our condemnation of immoral acts, there is certainly no *social* ground of resentment left; and, as I said, I am not arguing against a Stoic or æsthetic or theological view. Socially, it would be an enormous improvement if we kept this analysis in mind. If moralists talked less about "vice," which has an academic sound, and more about "crime" and honour, there would be less suffering in the world. The experience of two

thousand years has not commended the Church's practice of denouncing vice when it ought to have appealed to a man's sense of honour or justice. It put the accent on the wrong syllable. Many a man will shrink from an act which is unjust, or may involve cruelty, if he is accustomed to regard it as such. He is not so effectively intimidated by terms like virtue and vice, which require a whole moral philosophy or theology to invalidate them.

But I am not for a moment contending that this removal of the accent from one syllable to another leaves the law as it was. It is, on the contrary, the very essence of my contention that the law must, in the real interest of men and women, be altered and that a large amount of ethical tyranny, which has no justification, must be abandoned. Let me first put, with entire candour, what seems to me to be the only rational reconstruction of sex-morality on a social basis, and then we may regard the reasons for advocating it.

It is, as I said, clear that if a man or woman marries on a strict monogamous contract, and holds his or her partner to that contract, there is a plain obligation of justice to adhere to it. If, on the other hand, a man and woman choose to marry on any other understanding, or choose to grant each other (as is now frequently done) a greater liberty than the contract implies, their behaviour is entirely their own concern, and no moralist who takes his stand on purely social grounds has anything to say to it. In regard to unmarried intercourse, it is further

plain that a man commits an immoral or anti-social act who entails on an unmarried woman the grave injury which child-bearing does entail in our social order generally. It must, however, be recognised that guilt is in this case entirely relative to circumstances. Where public opinion does not make a pariah of such a woman, where no risk of suffering is involved, such an act of "free love" is no concern of the social moralist. Hence, if two people of mature intelligence, making a just provision for possible children, choose to live together without marriage, it is entirely their own concern; and if any woman, strong and judicious enough to take the responsibility of her acts, chooses love without marriage, it is her own concern.

If there seems to be an unfamiliar coldness and deliberation about this defence of "licence," it is enough to recall the familiar circumstances. One cannot, as a rule, inquire dispassionately into this subject without raising an hysterical storm. The clergy and other puritans accuse a man of the basest and most selfish motives; they seem, indeed, so incapable of understanding that a man may plead for this moral reconstruction on motives at least as unselfish and elevated as their own that their obtuseness does little credit to their own moral physiognomy. They make fanatical appeals to indiscriminating prejudice, repeat silly phrases about "passion" and "farmyard morals," and rely on intimidation. The consequence is, that ordinary folk openly bow to their rhetoric and

secretly ignore it. Any properly observant person can find out in a week to what extent London observes the virtue of purity. It is then left to rebellious poets and novelists and other artists to make fiery onslaughts on the tyranny : to speak of virtue as " the ash of a burnt-out fire," to chant " the roses and raptures of vice," or to say scornfully with Blake :

"And priests in black gowns were walking their rounds,
And binding with briars my joys and desires."

Therefore I have chosen to apply to the issue the cold deductive processes with which experience as a professor of moral philosophy has made me familiar. As I said, the Christian is free to observe his supposed divine command, the Stoic may bow to a mystic and inscrutable law, the moral æsthete may enthuse over the charm of virtue ; but I maintain that the sociological or utilitarian view of morals, which is now generally accepted by the vast number of people who have ceased to be Christian, cannot control sex-relations in any other sense than this. A man must avoid injustice and hardship : a woman must use her discretion. Indeed, as the clergy and the puritans now take their stand commonly on social grounds, these social considerations are effective against them.

But the question is not merely academic. These cold and severe deductions are very properly opposed to the heated phraseology and sentimentality of Conservatives, who profess to be concerned about

our social welfare, but I am really pleading for the greater happiness of the race, the lessening of hypocrisy, the curtailment of a system of prostitution which makes the lives of so many women end in horror. With all their talk about our "social welfare," the clergy and their puritan supporters are in this respect the gravest disturbers and restricters of our social welfare; and the insolence with which they assail every attempt at reform is ludicrous in view of their own record and gravely prejudicial to the advance of human happiness. It is not a question of abolishing marriage, or of interfering with the liberty of any. At one moment the clergy represent marriage as so beneficent, so solidly established in the hearts of our people, that only a morbid sensualist ever assails it; and the next moment they suggest, in effect, that if we relax our coercion, people will abandon marriage in such numbers that the social order will be overwhelmed. Let us have sincerity and liberty.

But neither is it a question of spreading a gospel of "free love," in the perverse sense in which the clergy conceive such a gospel. The considerations I have given above should make this plain enough. It is a question of securing freedom and love for the hundreds of thousands of mature women who cannot marry, or who do not choose to enter upon the very precarious experiment of surrendering their privacy and independence: a question of breaking the tyranny of an old superstition which, by means of public opinion, forbids so many women

to have the child they desire to have, or the share of happiness from which they are excluded: a question of putting an end to a vast amount of needless suffering and privation and hypocrisy. The State would gain rather than lose by this freedom: it is the Church only that would suffer. Thousands of women already hold these views, as the open circulation of the *Freewoman* (a few years ago) and of our bolder novelists shows. The feeling gains ground yearly, and the time is approaching when that seal of ignominy which our priest-made law puts on the "illegitimate" child will be removed, and men and women will cease to speak of "lust." Sex-pleasure has no more taint than any other, and the notion that it is justified only as an accompaniment to the begetting of children, or to lessen the risk of adultery, is childishly irrational and generally insincere. Laws there must be: but the laws must be made for men, not men for the laws. It is time that Europe shook off the conceptions of conduct which were imposed on it by impotent monks like Gregory VII., and framed its own rules in accordance with the new and healthier attitude toward life. Asceticism is a commercial speculation—the sacrifice of earth for a double share of heaven—which we have no longer reason to appreciate.

The progress of this view will be assisted by two contemporary reforms of received opinion. One regards the economic dependence of woman on man, which I will discuss later. I need only recall here that some of the worst evils of our marriage-

system—the scheming and bartering and linking for life—are due to this dependence. The other reform is the widespread and increasing rejection of the old idea that a woman must bear as many children as nature will permit her to have.

There is amongst us a disgusting amount of hypocrisy in regard to this question. The majority of educated people of all classes, even many of the clergy, now practise artificial limitation of the family, yet we proceed on the fiction that this is a disreputable practice. We turn into pornographic dépôts the shops which sell contraceptives, and we allow an antiquated law to be drastically enforced against men who would be decent purveyors of the things we use in secret. We have talked, and read journalistic articles, about “the dwindling population of France” for twenty years, though it is only within the last year or so that it has even slightly decreased; and the birth-rate alone shows that London and Berlin and every other great city are rapidly approaching the condition of Paris. We listen without protest to the lamentations of half-informed faddists on the limitation of the birth-rate in ancient Rome (where the practice was confined to a few, and proved an excellent means of saving the State by ridding it of a worn-out nobility) or the medieval republics of Italy. And while we perpetrate these and a hundred other follies, we know that the majority of us who are educated and unprejudiced find the practice humane and commendable. We would, it seems, rather leave frail

girls to the mercy of quacks and dangerous operators than tell them openly what better-educated ladies do to avoid conception.

Yet we have not here even the excuse of an antique religious command. The Catholic Church, it is true, severely condemns the use of contraceptives, but one finds that its prohibition is based merely on the reasoning of medieval celibates. With those who argue that the practice is "against nature" one hardly needs to discuss. Half the distinctive things of civilisation are "against nature," nor is there any reason why we should not depart from the ways of that ancient and unintelligent dame. Hardly less foolish is the alarm about our dwindling birth-rate. With every industry and profession already much overcrowded, we do not act very intelligently in censuring the modern restriction of production. But these are, to a great extent, either wholly insincere expressions or confused repetitions of ancient prejudices. In France, where a society arose for the checking of the practice, it was found that the members had an average of one child and a half in each family. A similar census among the writers and associations which attack Malthusianism in England might yield an instructive result.

One can understand the hostility to Malthusianism—or, rather, Neo-Malthusianism, since Malthus's idea of restricting population by avoiding intercourse is unnecessarily heroic—in a country like Australia, which urgently requires population ;

though even in Australia the opposition is futile. One can understand such hostility in a land which has universal conscription, and neighbours with a superior army ; though I have elsewhere pointed out the sensible and natural way to settle this difficulty. But it is quite irrational in such a city as London. Five-sixths of us, it has been demonstrated, do not attend church or take our code of life meekly from the clergy, as our fathers did ; our labour-market is, in every division, enormously overcrowded ; and our army is not affected by the dwindling birth-rate. Why, in these circumstances, should the women of England be asked to undergo the pain and sickness and weariness of a yearly birth, and wear out their lives in the rearing of a large family ? Men have, as a rule, too little appreciation of the terrible burden they lay on their wives, but their own interest at least ought to weigh with them. Why be constrained to find the resources for rearing and educating a large family when a smaller family will give better chances to the children and conduce to the happiness of the home ?

To these questions the only answer is an irrational outpouring of antique rhetoric. It is mere " lust " to have commerce without children : it is " selfish " to wish to live in greater comfort by restricting the family : it is " unnatural." The man who would lessen the suffering of his companion in life, and obtain greater advantages and more loving care for his children by restricting their number, may smile at the futility of this kind of rhetoric. But it is

surely time, in the second decade of the twentieth century, to meet it with a frank and curt declaration that we have, and will use, a right to any pleasure which this life affords, provided it hurt no one. The last trace of asceticism should be trodden underfoot. The medieval clergy were a body of a few fanatics leading an army of hypocrites. Their ideas have no place in our life. Love and joy and comradeship are in themselves as much ours as the scent of the rose or the flavour of wine. It is time that we echoed defiantly the sneering words of the apostle, and said : Yes, *let us eat and drink*, for tomorrow we die. We are not likely to forget that life has other pleasures, of culture and art, besides those of the palate or of love. The supreme commandment is, as old Egypt said : "Thou shalt make no man weep." The supreme virtue is to quicken the hearts of men with joy and fill their minds with truth. And the time will come when the clergy, reading aright for the first time the life of the ages of faith, will say : "We never insisted on our theoretical asceticism until those dour sceptics of the nineteenth century compelled us : the Middle Ages were the ages of liberty."

The clergy are, in fact, in a dilemma. The cry of the hour is "social consequences." There is a vast amount of doleful recalling of dead civilisations and prediction of coming woe ; though England was never before so prosperous, solid, and free from crime. But dogmas have worn so thin that we must be pressed to maintain them, even if they are false,

on social grounds. The answer is quite simple. If any social quality or rule of conduct is necessary for our welfare and happiness in this world, we need no dogmatic foundation for it. Men will see that virtue is its own reward. And if any rule of conduct in the Christian code is *not* based upon the actual exigencies of life, there will be no social consequences if we disregard it. The superstitions I have assailed belong to this latter category.

But a campaign against the artificial restriction of the birth-rate has recently been inaugurated on what are thought to be serious social grounds, and this leads me to a third and last reform which the family will undergo. I refer to the Eugenic movement. Let me first explain why this hostility of Eugenists to the restriction of the birth-rate seems a needless and illogical complication of their aims.

This hostility is usually expressed in the form of a fear that the restriction of births among the "better class" and unrestricted increase of the "lower class" must lead to deterioration. One would think that the proper remedy of this would be to recommend prudential restriction to the mass of the workers, as the Malthusian League endeavours to do. It is a strange social idealism which would urge over-production all round, with its train of domestic and industrial evils, instead of urging restriction all round. It would also be interesting to learn the average number of children to a family among these zealous Eugenists, and whether they do not find middle-class professions as overcrowded

as the manual industries are. At all events, since it is now impossible to induce educated mothers to return to the virtuous and exacting industry of their Victorian predecessors, the best thing would be to educate the masses in a common-sense view of maternity and of their own interest.

It will suffice here, however, to deal with the saner side of the Eugenic movement. It proposes to eliminate bad human stock and promote the mating of good stocks. These are those who find it a degradation to introduce "the methods of the breeder" into human affairs, but the objection is merely silly. The methods of the modern breeder are an expression of intelligence, improving on nature; these old-fashioned folk would have us disregard the persuasion of intelligence and retain the crude methods of unintelligent nature. The serious question is: Is the Eugenic proposal sound and practicable?

As far as positive Eugenics, or the selection of good human stocks for breeding, is concerned, the recent evolution of the movement seems to show that no firm and practicable proposal can yet be formulated. The truth is that the movement is greatly enfeebled by a general reliance on disputed theories of heredity. Some Eugenists rely on Weismann's theory: some on the Mendelist theory. They do not realise that scientific men are by no means agreed upon these theories, and it is a serious mistake to build on either. In England most of our biologists are Weismannists (in a broad sense),

but there is more hostility to the theory in Germany and the United States, and both theories have lately had to confront grave difficulties. Any Eugenic proposal which is based on a theory of heredity must be regarded with reserve. The dogmatic statements of Professor Karl Pearson, for instance, in regard to the impossibility of altering by education the innate qualities of a child are entirely unwarranted. Heredity is still a mystery : and the relative importance of heredity and environment (or nature and nurture) is not yet determined.

Detaching the element of theory, we have a plain proposal to eradicate tainted stocks from the human garden and promote the growth of the sounder. As I have said, the positive proposal to breed has not yet been put before us in a practicable or discussable form. This is largely because Eugenists fear to alarm the public by pointing out how it affects the position of marriage. There are, however, many other difficulties. The extraordinary diversity among children of the same parents warns us that we cannot count on the result of mating human beings, with their infinitely more complex nervous systems, as we can count on the issue of mating sheep or dogs. The mediocrity of the living children of our ablest men of the last generation, even when the mother was an excellent mate, is another circumstance to be considered. We do not yet know the points to breed for, and there is no constancy of result. Eugenists sometimes refer to the physical or mental superiority of one

class of children over another, but in this they do not attempt to distinguish between the effect of environment and the natural endowment. Positive Eugenics is not yet beyond the stage of research. Such research, if conducted without academic prejudice (which is too apparent in many Eugenic papers), is of very great service ; and, if ever a firm proposal lies before us, we may trust that rhetorical phrases and clerical prejudices will not be allowed to bar the way.

In the case of negative Eugenics we are nearer agreement. Here again, however, research is not always candid. Inquiries have been made into the lineage of American criminals, and the large percentage of criminals in one family is held to indicate a tainted stock : it is not sufficiently noticed that they all lived in the same crime-breeding environment. Other Eugenists try to intimidate us with the cry that lunacy and crime are increasing rapidly : whereas (as I showed in the *Hibbert Journal*, April 1912) there is no proved increase of lunacy and no increase of crime, in proportion to the growth of population. These methods bring discredit on the Eugenic proposals. It is, however, now agreed that certain diseases, including certain forms of mental disease, are transmissible, and common-sense suggests that we should prevent their transmission. It is well to bear in mind, however, that these things affect only a fraction of the community. As is the case with every new social proposal, Eugenics is being pressed as a panacea ;

and it appeals to many as a fascinating method of healing our social maladies without touching the present distribution of wealth. It is one subsidiary remedy among the hundred which modern civilisation needs to apply. By all means let us discover what "tainted stocks," if any, there are amongst us; and let us have the elementary courage and intelligence to extinguish them, by the isolation, painless destruction, or sterilisation of their representatives.

The future of the family seems not obscure. Malthusian and Eugenic proposals will alter much of the crudeness and stupidity of the old family ideal, and ease of divorce will remove the blight it has put on many a home. Hundreds of thousands bless marriage with gratitude and sincerity: tens of thousands curse it with equal sincerity. Let there be liberty and life for all. For a modern legislature to ignore a vast amount of vice and misery, and be guided by the ancient formula of a celibate priesthood, is one of the most lamentable features of our civilisation. And the unbiased social student may look without concern on the growth of extra-matrimonial love. There is no interest of the State which forbids it, nor any sound principle of morals. The woman of the future will be her own mistress, responsible neither to priest nor moralist in this respect. If she chooses, she will marry; but she will not sacrifice half the joy of life because she cannot, or does not choose to, venture upon the experiment of domestic intimacy.

CHAPTER VII

THE FUTURE OF WOMAN

THE old tradition of the family is intimately connected with the old ideal of womanhood, and this in turn is summoned to the bar of modern criticism. A substantial change in the position of woman seems so revolutionary a disturbance, since it directly affects half the race and must very seriously affect the home and the State, that our Conservatives employ against the proposal the whole arsenal of controversial rhetoric. We hear of the wisdom of the race—as if the race did not grow wiser as it grows older—and the thin end of the wedge. We are reminded that the ancient civilisations always came to an end when their women rebelled against their natural position. We have private appeals to our sensuous feelings and our instincts of proprietorship, and open appeals to the ascetic doctrine of the Pauline Epistles. We have history put before us, as usual, in chosen fragments, and on the strength of these detached bits of learning we hear impressive sermons on the “ laws ” of history and of nature.

The appeal to history, which men like Dr. Emil Reich have so gravely abused, is in this case

singularly unfortunate. In most cases the candid student of history finds some ancient abuse or irrational tradition making its way from one civilisation to another, and finds it natural that our more critical and independent generation should at length seek to dethrone it. But in the case of woman the Conservative has not even "the wisdom of the race" to appeal to. Her position in the past has varied greatly, but it is very far from true that she had always occupied that state of subjection in which our Victorian reformers found her. I have elsewhere (*Woman in Political Evolution*) surveyed the full story of woman's development, and will here be content with a summary view which makes the Feminist movement of our time intelligible.

During the greater part of the history of civilisation, in the Egyptian and Mesopotamian empires, woman had a considerable measure of freedom and respect. When the Greeks and Romans entered the stage, they brought with them a different tradition in regard to woman, but as soon as they reached the height of their cultural development, their women (and many of their men) rebelled against this tradition. The civilisation of Greece was extinguished so speedily that the women of Athens, aided by so eminent a thinker as Plato, had not time to win their emancipation; but the Roman women did succeed in lifting themselves from their position of subjection. In the meantime, however, the political and religious development of Europe led

to the reappearance of the barbaric tradition in a new form. The Christian leaders had in their sacred documents the social code of a rude Semitic tribe, the Jews, which was sternly emphasised by St. Paul, and they brooded darkly over the position of woman. Tertullian fiercely reminded Christians that, but for woman, the race would never have been damned. Ambrose ingeniously reflected that Eve was made out of a mere rib, not out of the brain, of Adam. Augustine regarded woman as an unpleasant institution created by Providence for the relief of weak-willed males and for the maintenance of the race. Jerome frowned heavily on the Roman woman's claim of emancipation. This quaint mixture of Jewish contempt and ascetic dread was imposed on Europe by the triumphant priesthood, educated mainly in the opinions of "the Fathers," and woman sank again to a position of inferiority and subjection.

Women writers of many countries have written this story of the degradation of their sex in Christian Europe, and one can only admire the splendid audacity with which Bishop Welldon assures women that Jesus Christ (who never uttered a protest against the Jewish conception or a warning against the coming abuse of it) was "the first to respect them," or the Bishop of London describes Christianity as "woman's best friend," or Bishop Diggle represents the Christian as an advance on the Roman attitude. Our clergy are distinguished for the facility with which they make historical state-

ments without giving us any serious evidence of a command of history ; they have the advantage of being able to assure their followers that it is a " sin " to read more accurate and less orthodox experts.

The historical truth is that the nineteenth century found woman in a position far lower than that she had occupied at Rome seventeen centuries before —far lower, indeed, than she had occupied during (except for two brief periods) the many thousands of years of the history of civilisation. It was quite inevitable that a movement for her emancipation and uplifting should find a place among the great reforms initiated in the last century. To conceive this movement as a semi-hysterical rebellion against the settled usage of the race is merely to betray a gross ignorance of history. Recent experience has taught us that there is a great deal in the settled usage of the race to rebel against ; but it is false that in this case we are doing so. The undisputed historical truth is that woman had been comparatively free and respected during the greater part of the civilised period : that, when the early civilisations of Greece and Rome had placed her in subjection for a few centuries, she, at the beginning of the Christian era, rebelled and won her emancipation : and that the later period of subjection was merely due to the incorporation in the Christian religion of the primitive and crude ideal of a polygamous Arab tribe. Against this intolerable superstition modern civilisation has rebelled, and we are

in the midst of a far deeper discussion of woman's nature and position than ever occurred before.

The discussion is passing through the three phases which are customary in these controversies. At first the clergy and the Conservative quoted the Bible and the Fathers. Then, when women began to show that they were disposed to examine a little more closely the authority of documents which taught so obvious an injustice, it was pleaded that in this case the religious view coincided with "sound" science and sociology. In that phase we are to-day, discussing claims that "nature" and our social interest are on the side of the old ideal. In a few more decades, when the battle is won, the Bishop of London of the time will be demonstrating that the reform was anticipated by the Fathers sixteen hundred years ago and was contained, in germ, in the New Testament.

At present the controversy about woman's position turns largely on the question of her "nature," and the literature of the subject is prodigious. Woman has different organs and functions than those of man, and it is natural to suppose that they will give her a different character. Here is the opportunity of the male : he has a solid scientific fact to build upon.

He sagely examines the intellectual life of woman and pronounces it inferior to that of man : he measures her brain and finds it smaller than that of man, and thus discovers the scientific basis of her inferiority ; and he never reflects that, since he,

on the whole, forbade her to develop her brain and intelligence during the fifteen centuries of Christian domination, it may be that her brain is not working with all the energy of which it is capable. He lays down for this dependent creature a certain code of deportment and behaviour, and, when it has enfeebled her, he discourses on her inferior muscular development: if any girls or women defiantly exercise their muscles and become strong, he calls them "unwomanly" and happily exceptional. He observes that woman is more emotional than man; and, of course, he does not ask physiologists whether this may be merely, or mainly, the effect (as it is) of the muscular and intellectual restrictions he has placed on her. He bids her develop pretty curves on her body for his entertainment, and never thinks about the physiological and psychological effect of the dead mass of fat and the flabby muscles. He kindly undertakes (for a consideration) the care of this weaker companion, and, when she begins to prove that she can fend for herself, he severely censures her for intruding on his labour-market. He learns from novelists that she has a peculiar power of "intuition" (in fiction), and a greater fineness of perception than man (which exact experiment in America has shown to be untrue), and is altogether a deep and unfathomable being. And he then, in virtue of his superior understanding of her "mysterious" nature, proceeds to dictate to her about her sphere and her capacities.

The absurdities and contradictions of male

writers on women, supported by some women writers, during the last two hundred years, would fill a volume. They were more or less intelligible, and certainly entertaining, in the earlier part of the modern period, but at a time when we have scientific and historical information to guide us they are neither intelligent nor amusing. We now know that there is no such thing as an unchangeable nature of a living organism. Structure and function vary with use and environment, whatever theory of heredity one follows. Forbid the brain and muscles to function for some centuries, and they will become feebler: restore their activity and they will return to strength. Shut a woman out of politics or business or war, and she will lose her capacity for it: reintroduce her to it, and her faculties are sharpened. When the kings of Dahomi formed a regiment of women in their army, the women were found to be more deadly fighters than the men, and they drank as heavily.

As far as the political phase of the modern Feminist struggle is concerned, the application of these principles is clear enough. When statesmen can find no better argument against the enfranchisement of women than the fact that (like the politicians themselves) they do no military service, and when scientific men plead only their periodical perturbations and their "change of life," it is time to cease arguing. Even in countries which have a system of conscription it has never been proposed that those who are exempt from

service should not have a vote. In a country like England the objection is supremely foolish: it reminds one of Plato's ironical argument, in this connection, that men who are bald should not be allowed to make shoes. As to the comparative disturbance of judgment which a certain proportion of women suffer at certain periods, it is preposterous to suppose that this does not unfit them for more important work, but *does* unfit them for casting a vote once in seven years. Is it suggested that the Conservative matron will, if an election fall in her period of nervous instability, march in a frenzy to the poll and vote for Keir Hardie? Even the more or less intoxicated male voter does not overrule a settled conviction so easily. But it is waste of time to discuss such matters. A simple investigation of years of experience in America and Australasia is more valuable than the pedantic declarations of one or two scientific men. Even Conservative Australians smiled when I asked them if the consequences of female enfranchisement, as they are darkly foreboded by serious people in England, had been observed in their Commonwealth.

The anti-suffrage campaign has been the death-blow of the prejudice against the enfranchisement of women. It has shown the complete futility of the Conservative position. Women would probably have the vote in England to-day if a section of those who demand it had not taken a false path. The end, however sacred, does not justify criminal

means; nor can any serious statesman yield to violence and intimidation. Yet there is nothing in this temporary aberration to strengthen the anti-Feminist position. It was an error of judgment and a misreading of history. I am well acquainted with many of the ladies who did these regrettable things, and I know that the suggestion of "hysteria" is an insult. It is, however, useless to discuss this question further. Women will be enfranchised in England within a few years, and in all civilised nations within a quarter of a century.

Then will begin the campaign for the right to sit in Parliament, even in the Ministry. From sheer force of prejudice the great majority of the enfranchised women will resist this further claim, and the long story of education and agitation will be repeated. This is the outcome of our habit of persistently compromising with false traditions instead of frankly discarding them. The immortal jokes about women will be retailed in the House of Commons by our legislators; the same dark warnings will come from scientific Cassandras who have felt social influence; the same tragic whispers about "what every woman knows" will be heard in drawing-rooms. Then, about the year 1930, we will discover that woman is really capable of undertaking the not very exacting duties of the average Member of Parliament,—if we have not in the meantime abolished these aimless long debates on subjects which all approach with a fixed conviction,—and that it may not be impossible to find a

woman with the capacity of Mr. Reginald M'Kenna or Lord Gladstone or Mr. Walter Long. Our Mrs. Humphry Wards will be the first to compete for the office.

I turn to the more serious question of the economic enfranchisement of women. On this side of the Feminist movement our views are hardly less hazy than in regard to politics. The middle-class, being the brain as well as the backbone of England, is chiefly responsible for the maxim that woman's place is the home ; but the middle-class is also the great employer of labour, and it has found that female labour is cheaper than male, and has therefore concluded that woman's proper place is the office or the workshop. More than a fourth of the girls and women of England work outside the home. This material incentive to right views is, however, limited in its action. When the middle-class woman in turn seeks economic independence, she is received with coldness, if not derision. Women may be clerks, teachers, actresses, telegraphists, hosiery-makers, etc., but they ought not to aspire to be doctors, lawyers, or stockbrokers. If they ask the reason, they hear an inconsistent jumble of statements. In the first place, of course, they are not clever enough ; in the second place, however, they are likely to be so far successful that they would lessen the available employment of men.

Certainly in such a haphazard industrial world as ours the accession of a fresh army of workers will cause, and is causing, confusion. On the *laissez-*

faire principle this overcrowding of the market is good; it gives a greater play to selection and promotes efficiency. But we have, as I said, forced *laissez-faire* to compromise with decency. We prefer a little overcrowding, but not too much. The opening of the doors of all the professions to woman means a worse overcrowding than ever in the medical and legal worlds, and we naturally hesitate.

Naturally, but not justly or logically. Between logic and justice the modern man pleads that he is distracted, and he asks time for reconstruction; asks, in other words, that we should leave the trouble to another generation. This shrinking from trouble is of no avail. We have sanctioned the principle of female industry outside the home—millions of women are so employed in England to-day—and we have absolutely no ground to limit it except the natural disability of woman or the social need for her to undertake other functions. Of her natural disability little need be said here. We have had, in most countries, decades of experience of the employment of women in many industries—teaching, nursing, journalism, factory-work, art, theatre, post-office, type-writing, shop-work, and so on. What proportion of complaint to the number of workers is there that their periodical functions make them unfit for employment? We do not need learned experts on gynecology to tell us of the acute and exceptional cases which have come under their observation. The scientific and

practical procedure is to make a general inquiry into the net result of our employment of millions of girls and women. Most of us would await such a report with confidence. As long as the wages of women are lower than those of men, we hear very little complaint ; nor do we find the work of our schools or the play of our theatres very much interrupted by peculiarly feminine weaknesses. Of late years women have shown that they are equally qualified to be dentists, doctors, chartered accountants, etc. Common-sense would persuade us, if we would find the real limits of woman's capacity, to open to her all the doors of the world of work and learn it by experience.

One must give more serious attention to the claim that this economic enfranchisement of women will tend to lessen maternity, and will therefore endanger our social interests. This question of the birth-rate is, in fact, very important from many points of view, and it is extremely advisable to have a clear and reasoned grasp of it. Many people are at once alarmed if it is shown that a practice will tend to lessen the birth-rate. They rarely examine with critical attention the reasons which would be alleged by those who maintain that a lowering of the birth-rate is a social menace.

But one needs no lengthy reflection to discover that at the root of all this clamour for maintaining or increasing the birth-rate we have only military requirements. Some, indeed, urge that a nation needs as many soldiers as possible for her industrial

army as well as for her military forces ; but, seeing that each nation already has more than she can employ, we are not impressed by this phrase. It is not volume of production, or gross largeness of revenue, which makes a nation great. It is the proportion of her revenue to her population, and in that respect some of the smallest States are the most happily situated. The need of a large army alone justifies complaints about a falling birth-rate, and it is monstrous that we should lay this strain on parents merely in order to produce " fodder for cannon." The actual need of each country, as long as the military system lasts, must, of course, be met, but—apart from the hope that we will soon cast off the greater part of this military burden—two circumstances show that we have not here a sound and permanent social need. The birth-rate is falling in all civilised countries, and will eventually reach a common low level ; and the war has shown us that a nation with a reduced population may, like any nation with a small population, find compensation for its weakness in alliances.

The truth is that the premature advance of France in restricting its birth-rate has led to a general fallacy. France exposed itself to a particular danger in face of Germany, and this special weakness of France was converted into the general statement that any nation which reduces its birth-rate is in danger. Not only is the general statement untrue, but the particular case of France is very carelessly conceived. After 1871 the German

Empire had such an advantage in population over France, and (until 1895) so much less need of maintaining a fleet, that even a full birth-rate would not have equipped France confidently for a combat. In any case, we come back always to military needs, and we may trust that these will not long impose their terrible strain on civilisation. There is, apart from them, no reason why the birth-rate should not sink in every country to the level of the death-rate, and in many countries even lower.

On the other hand, the superficial folk who cry for heavy maternity and full cradles overlook a very important social fact. I am thinking chiefly of the men and women who denounce in principle the practice of restricting births. Not only do they ignore the overcrowding of our trades and professions,—and they are usually amongst the most reluctant to organise them,—but they fail to notice that the increasing application of science and humane sentiment to our modes of living threatens the earth, as a whole, with enormous over-population, unless the birth-rate be checked. The population of England has increased nearly fourfold in the past hundred years, whereas it had little more than doubled in the previous two hundred years. The factors which are responsible for this vast modern increase are becoming more active every decade, and are spreading over the world. How will the population of Europe and Asia stand when they are fully applied in Russia, China, and India? Within twenty years the United States, according

to its agricultural experts, will have as large a population as it can support, and we have already seen Germany very largely thrust into war because of its superabundant population. The future is full of peril and misery if we continue to allow this military demand for men to masquerade as a sound and permanent human need. The birth-rate *must* be checked.

We must therefore refuse to allow the path of reform to be obstructed by either the priest or the drill-sergeant. If ever a time comes when some real interest of the race is endangered by too low a birth-rate, we may trust the race to see to it. Conservatives often imagine that those who would reform life on common-sense lines are devoid of sentiment. They confuse sentiment and sentimentality, which is sentiment out of accord with reason. The man of the future will be, in my judgment, not less, but more emotional than the man of to-day; but he will not allow ancient prejudices and mere phrases to have the unchecked support of his feelings. It will not be enough to tell him that divorce is increasing, or the birth-rate falling, or respect for the clergy deteriorating. He will ask the precise value in social terms of your boggy. At present we have, on broad social grounds, much to gain and nothing to lose by a fall of the birth-rate. Indeed, the prospect of a fall is, as far as this economic development alone is concerned, much exaggerated. Millions of employed women have, and will continue to have, children.

Under our present system of industry this has undoubtedly certain risks and burdens ; under the organised system of employment for which I plead it will be possible to adjust employment to maternal functions.

And this brings me to the cardinal issue of the whole controversy : the economic position of the married woman or the mother. Let us face this graver position quite candidly. The industrial disorganisation will right itself in the course of time. The middle-class father of our time whose daughter does a certain amount of work, not in order to relieve his pocket, but in order to buy additional luxuries for herself, has assuredly a grievance. She takes part of a man's work and pay, yet leaves on him the old burden of maintenance. She makes matters worse by accepting a low wage, because she is not self-maintaining. I am assuming that women will become independent economic units, and that the rate of payment will be—equal wage for equal service.

But the position of the married woman, or of the independent woman who undertakes maternal functions, forms a special and difficult problem, which is pressing upon us more heavily every decade. There is spreading rapidly through the civilised world a feeling of rebellion against the economic dependence of wife or husband. No Conservative argumentation, no censure of new ideas, no religious preaching of self-sacrifice for a doubtful reward in heaven, will relieve us of this

difficulty. Educated women—statistics of college-taught women are available—are increasingly rebelling against the subjection or inferiority which this economic dependence seems to entail. It is the chief motive of the general demand for economic independence (or an independent place in the industrial world) and has much to do with the revolt against marriage itself. Whether or no we adopt new ideals of social life, this revolt will spread.

One very quickly sees that it is not so much marriage as the traditional practice of husbands which is chiefly responsible for the revolt. The practice varies considerably, but, apart from a small class in which the wife brings with her or earns an independent income, it is still generally true to say that the wife receives what the husband chooses to give. Now it is plain that this difficulty may be met in a very large proportion of cases by an equitable voluntary agreement. Various domestic experiments of the kind are being tried, and a comparison of experiences would be useful. Many people are agreed in the just view that, since the wife works at home while the husband works abroad, all income is joint income. A common fund, accessible to both, is assigned for household and saving, and an equal and fixed personal share is taken by each from the income or wage. Such an arrangement is quite easily practised by middle-class people, and it seems to me to remove every legitimate suspicion of ignominy from the wife's position.

When unmarried women have secured economic independence they will be able to demand some such arrangement before marrying. The kind of "modesty" which would prevent a woman from having an understanding before marriage in regard to income and children is a very costly and foolish luxury. Let them insist that the ritual words, "With all my worldly goods I thee endow," must mean something more than that they shall have chocolates and pretty dresses *if* they humour the moods of a husband. Our law, which secures for a wife full maintenance when she has ceased to do any work for it (after a separation), but has no interest in her when she is working dutifully for twelve or fourteen hours a day, is infinitely more dangerous to marriage than are the puritan assaults of Mr. G. B. Shaw. In any case, a voluntary agreement that a wife has access to the bank and cash-box, and a right to take for personal use the same sum as her husband, removes all need of asking money from a husband (which is justly odious to many women), and makes a wife economically independent in any important sense of the word.

But it would be futile to hope either that the majority of men will thus surrender their privileged position, or that all women will recognise even such an arrangement as economic independence. A grave conflict undoubtedly lies before us, and there will be an increasing demand for the State-endowment of wifehood, or at least of motherhood. The suffrage movement has naturally inflamed the

difficulty by educating women in a sense of grievance. Indeed, it seems to many of us that Feminist writers have at times gone far beyond legitimate grievances and set up fictitious and mischievous standards. This is a very common development of propagandist movements which meet with a prolonged resistance. The first generation of agitators says the obvious and just things in regard to the reform: the next generation must revive the jaded sentiment with stimulating novelties and exaggerations. It seems to me one of these morbid exaggerations to speak of marriage as "legalised prostitution"; to imagine that one is "selling one's body" to a man, or receiving payment for ministering to his "lust." One Feminist writer of some influence, and some pretension to knowledge of science, has actually compared the human male very unfavourably with all other male animals in the world, on the ground that the latter are content with a restricted period of "rut"!

This mixture of ancient Puritanism and advanced sociology is as incongruous as it is mischievous. A woman who sincerely regards sex-pleasure in the way generally implied by the use of the word "lust"—a woman who has not the same healthy desire of it as her partner—has no right to marry: except, of course, to marry a man with similarly antique views. A wife of such a kind may very well consider that she is being "paid" to surrender her body. The normal wife is not paid for that at all. She is paid—if there is any paying—to care for the home

and her children : which is as well earned a payment as the fee of a lawyer. And from the sentimental point of view it does not make a particle of difference whether she is paid out of her husband's income or out of the coffers of the State. She would still "sell her body," if there is any selling of body. But there is not. Maternity and sex-pleasure are entirely different matters.

I am deliberately trying to undermine the plea for the endowment of motherhood, because the proposal seems to me to present very grave difficulties which even so penetrating a sociologist as Mr. H. G. Wells has, apparently, not appreciated. Mr. Wells is, of course, in a very different position from the Feminist writers who advocate the complete endowment or maintenance of wives or mothers by the State. Such a scheme would cost about £300,000,000 a year, and need not be discussed. Mr. Wells suggests rather a modest contribution per child born (leaving out, I assume, wealthier mothers) ; a practicable scheme, with much in its favour. Yet it seems to me that such endowment would mean that we would encourage the weakest in will, the most sensual, the least intelligent and least provident of our people, to breed. Intelligent women would not abandon the practice of restricting births because the State offered them a few shillings per child. The better class—whether of manual or professional workers—would have to pay for the undesirable fertility of the worst class. We are just beginning to realise that quality of children

is more precious than quantity, and the endowment of motherhood would not encourage this saner view. The kind of brute who is at present restrained by the paternity-law would be restrained no longer : the rougher type of husband—a very numerous type—would pay so much less to his wife when he found the State contributing (either in cash or kind) to her : the man who at present practises restriction, not out of consideration for his wife and family, but to have more shillings for himself, would cease to practise it, and lay a greater burden on his wife.

But, while there seem to be such grave objections to the endowment of motherhood that we do better to strengthen women in their individual demand of justice, we must remember that the wife will have the advantage of other changes in the home. Domestic service is becoming more and more repugnant to girls, and some form of co-operative and efficient housekeeping, with common servants and restaurant, will be adopted. Some day a photograph of a twentieth-century suburb will provoke a smile. Perhaps the museum of the future will set up models of our establishments, just as we set up in our ethnographical galleries models of a Kaffir or a Papuan household. Boys and girls will gaze with admiring delight at the naïveté of the model : a thousand brick boxes, separated by a thousand little gardens, with three thousand little chimneys smoking, a thousand amateur cooks perspiring over a thousand fires, and a thousand inefficient servant-

girls flirting with the servants of rival butchers and dairymen. The common nursery will especially relieve the mother and lower the death-rate. The State will one day have an interest in seeing that each babe ushered into the world, at such pain and sacrifice, becomes a useful citizen. If any mothers care to entrust the child more fully to it, the State will find it profitable to respond. These things can be arranged without more detriment to parental affection than there is in the case of women—often women who write beautiful things in defence of the old tradition—who have nurses for the child and send it later to a distant school for the greater part of the year.

Reforms of this kind will enormously relieve the home life and enable even mothers to earn, if they wish, quite as much as the State would ever be able to award them. The work will be better done, by trained workers, at less cost. People do not reflect that this change has been proceeding for centuries. Once the wife brewed the ale, and baked the bread, and spun the linen : later she entrusted these things to experts working for the community, and reserved for herself the making of preserves, pickles, underclothing, and antimacassars : now these things have gone to the expert, and the wife confines her amateur efforts to scolding children and cooking refractory joints. She will be relieved when it is all over, and we shall have no more of the " beautiful doll " or the domestic drudge. The independent position and greater leisure and broader interest in life will

make her intellectual activity more similar to that of man's.

I speak, of course, of the mass of women, and do not forget that already the intellect of alert and thoughtful women is equal to that of men of the corresponding class. The majority will be, as it were, differently orientated toward life by these changes. A saner muscular activity will restore the balance of the system, and will rid them of the excessive nerve-energy, particularly of the sympathetic system, which finds expression in facile and explosive emotion. There will assuredly always be a bias toward sentiment in woman, and we have no reason to fear a deterioration of the distinctively feminine sentiments of tenderness, refinement, and sympathy. The relief from the more irritating domesticities ought to accentuate them. On the other hand, the idea of obeying the male or practising self-sacrifice for his undue benefit, will certainly disappear; and it is quite time that it did. Self-sacrifice, in case of need, comes instinctively to either sex, but the kind of self-sacrifice which a selfish masculine tradition has pressed on women is degrading to the man and unjust to wife and daughter. All that is attractive and really beneficent in woman will be fostered, but on the emotional side it will become less and less characteristic of one sex. The sharp contrast of the sexes tends to disappear. There is something grotesque about the traditional idea that the human male must be distinguished by a greater capacity for taking

alcohol and using meaningless expletives and telling sexual stories. Even in physical strength and athletic skill the sexes are approaching ; nor does one find any loss of charm or grace in some of the finest women athletes.

These changes are proceeding, and, apart from inevitable errors and excesses, on which caricaturists fasten with their genial unscrupulousness, the result is promising. Contemporary expressions of alarm are often ludicrous. Thousands of ladies who are horrified at the emergence of " a new sex " are themselves contriving, by means which would have caused their prolific grandmothers to raise white hands to heaven, to limit their families to two children. We take our reform in small doses, as if complete social health were a thing to be considered very seriously. Yet if one patiently traces in imagination the effect of all these changes on the womanhood of the race, one foresees a generation of women which recalls Shelley's lines :

"And women, too, frank, beautiful, and kind
As the free heaven which rains fresh light and dew
On the wide earth, past ; gentle radiant forms,
From custom's evil taint exempt and pure ;
Speaking the wisdom once they could not think,
Looking emotions once they feared to feel,
And changed to all which once they dared not be,
Yet, being now, made earth like heaven ; nor pride,
Nor jealousy, nor envy, nor ill-shame,
The bitterest of those drops of treasured gall,
Spoilt the sweet taste of the nepenthe, love."

Grant the poet his licence ; women are not more

likely than men to become angels. The moral superiority which some Feminist writers claim for their sex is founded on a curiously narrow view of life ; if man, instead of woman, had to pay the penalty of sexual intercourse, we should probably find the aggression on the other side. Yet the most sober-minded of us must expect from this healthier balance of powers, this easing of the domestic burden, this limitation of care to a few children, and this independence of marital generosity or marital selfishness, a great advancement in the character and happiness of woman.

Shelley, however, was thinking less of wives than of free women, and economic independence will swell their numbers. The changes I have described will make marriage far less onerous, but they will also make it easier for a woman to dispense with marriage, and before the end of the twentieth century there will be in every city a growth of temporary unions and independent conduct. Woman will be mistress, morally and economically, of her own destiny ; she will consult neither husband nor priest. The plain moral law, which forbids a man to inflict pain or injustice, will be more faithfully observed than it ever was before. There will be an immense reduction of the hypocrisy, the prostitution, the misery and illness, which this fictitious law of chastity has always caused ; and the alteration of public opinion will remove from a woman the unpleasant consequences which unwedded love entails at the present time. It is preposterous to

say that the State will be injured by these changes, and it seems clear that woman will be happier, more healthily developed, and not less tender and graceful than she can be under the present reign of shams.

CHAPTER VIII

SHAMS OF THE SCHOOL

THE constructive scheme which I have in mind throughout this criticism of our prejudices and institutions may, as I said, be summed essentially in two words: industrial organisation and education. When we have reformed our administrative machinery, which we miscall "government," and abandoned our military and naval atrocities, and simplified international life, our chosen public servants will find that these two are their chief concerns. Probably the supreme concern will—once we have constructed an orderly industrial machinery—be education, in the sense which I would attach to the word. Every year a million new citizens will join the community, and it will be the State's first business to see that they are thoroughly prepared in every respect to contribute to its weal and happiness, and that they maintain throughout life sufficient intellectual alertness to control their common concerns with wisdom and in a progressive spirit. It is as a necessary preliminary to this that I have dealt critically and reconstructively with the home and the parent.

That glorification of indolence which we call the principle of *laissez-faire* is so successful in this department of our public life that what ought to be the State's chief concern is hardly ever mentioned in our orgies of parliamentary debate. We peck at it occasionally. We enact that babies must have orange-boxes, and that children must not smoke cigarettes or approach within a certain number of yards of a bar (so that we get bar-scenes outside the door); and occasionally the representatives of rival sects get up a grand debate on the Bible in the school. These things emphasise the general neglect. *Laissez-faire* meant originally, "Leave things as they are"—it sounded better in French, but, like many ancient sentiments, it was converted into a respectable philosophy: "The State must leave as much as possible to the individual and the amateur." Nineteenth-century Radicals fought heroically for this Conservative principle.

Education, however, was so flagrantly neglected by the parent and the Church that we had to compromise and take the child's mind out of their care: leaving its body and character to the old hazards. At last it dawns on us that a sound body and character are just as important to the State as the capacity to read comic journals and stories: that the entire being of the child needs expert training, and it is worth the State's while to give it. This broad ideal of education is increasingly accepted by pædagogists and social writers, and it is already largely embodied in educational practice. It has

provoked the usual reaction, the usual determination that we will not allow our ways to be reformed without a struggle. "Advanced" teachers fight with Conservative teachers and politicians (particularly of the vestry type), and the familiar old hymn-tunes are heard throughout the land. We must not weaken parental responsibility: we must not lessen the charm of the domestic circle: we must not encroach on the sphere of the Church: we must beware of Socialism: we must resist the thin end of the wedge wherever we see one.

Why did the State, in the first half of the nineteenth century, undertake the task of educating the young? I do not mean that State-education was a new thing in history when a few European Governments adopted it little over a century ago. The Roman Empire had had a very fair system of municipal and State-education, and it is one of the gravest charges against the clergy that they suffered it to decay, and allowed or compelled ninety per cent. of their followers to remain in a state of gross ignorance for fourteen hundred years. At the end of the eighteenth century, as the revolt against ecclesiastical authority spread, the idea of State-education was revived. In England the clergy warmly resisted the progress of the idea, but the appalling ignorance of the people proved intolerable to the increasing band of reformers. Quakers like Lancaster and Agnostics like Robert Owen demanded and provided schools for the children of the workers, and the Church of England was forced

to meet this danger of unsectarian education by founding a rival and orthodox association. But for fifty years the schooling remained so primitive, and the proportion of illiterates remained so enormous, that at last the bishops were brushed aside and the Government was compelled to resume the work of the old Roman municipalities and Senate.

The motives of the reformers and statesmen who secured this advance were complex. Some of them were frankly anti-clerical and eager to undermine superstition : some of them were business-men who pleaded that a lettered worker was worth more to the State than an illiterate worker. The predominant feeling was, as it had been among the Stoic reformers at Rome, humanitarian. The gross ignorance of the mass of the people was a disgrace to civilisation and a source of brutality and crime : it was a human duty to educate. It was very widely recognised that this sentiment imposed on us a duty of developing the child's character as well as its mind, but here the Churches were inflexible. Unblushingly asserting that they were the historic educators of Europe, they refused to relinquish their last hold on the school, and the State was compelled to accept the compromise of religious instruction in the public schools, as well as the endowment of sectarian schools. As to the third part of the ideal of education, the cultivation of the body, we may admit that science itself was not yet sufficiently advanced to demand it.

With the growth of democratic aspirations, the

Conservative began to see a danger in this plea that the community must see to the full development of all its children, and new phrases were invented. "Industrial efficiency" was the most plausible of these checks on education. The manual workers were to have their intellects awakened to the slight extent which was needed to make them better instruments of production, but no further: lest they should become dissatisfied with their position of inferiority and disturb our excellent industrial order. Educators, however, refused to be restrained by this kind of sociology. It was their business to develop the child's intelligence, and they had a fine ambition to do it thoroughly. They built infant-schools, which took the tender young away from their mothers, to the great advantage of both. They found that large numbers of children were too poorly fed or too defective in body to receive real education, and they instituted drill and demanded cheap or free meals and medical inspection. They abolished the half-timer, and raised the age of compulsory attendance. They began to resent the idea that lessons from the Bible were a training of character. These developments have alarmed many. They begin to see that in the long-run these things will impose on the State the duty of developing the child's whole being—body, mind, and character—before the boy or girl is allowed to enter the industrial world. We hesitate, as we do in face of all large and fully developed ideals, and look round for ways of escape.

The chief of these evasions is still the doctrine of what we call "parental responsibility." Some day the idea that a parent is the best-fitted person to train a child will be regarded as a medieval superstition. The parent is as amateurish in training children as in cooking or making frocks. The notion that "nature tells" a mother what to do is part of the crude psychology of the Schoolmen. From the moment of birth, and during the months before birth, the human mother has no inspiration whatever. She goes by tradition, by the crude advice of elders and neighbours, as every observer of the arrival of the first baby knows. A cat acts by what we call "instinct,"—by certain neuromuscular reactions which natural selection has perfected,—but a human being has intelligence instead of instinct, and the first thing intelligence enjoins is that experts ought to be trained for particular duties. The death-rate in every civilised country has gone down enormously since we ceased to rely on motherly instinct, or grandmotherly fables. A time may come, therefore, when the State will receive a bearing woman in a properly appointed home, and will care for the child from the moment of birth until, in its later teens, it is equipped for work. I will suggest in the next chapter that this ought by no means to be regarded as the completion of education; here I am concerned only with the earlier part. Many are convinced that this is the last and logical term of the development on which we have entered.

I am avoiding remote ideals as much as possible, but it is important to meet the prejudice which opposes reform along this line. Many people tell us that, if this unnatural dethronement of the mother and invasion of the home are to be the final terms of our present development, they will resist it at every step: on the familiar thin-end-of-the-wedge principle. Our beautiful "home life" must be preserved at all costs. Our "parental instincts" shall not be enfeebled.

Candidly, in what proportion of the real homes of England, as distinct from the home of a fiction-writer, is the life "beautiful"? In what proportion does it not rather present the spectacle of an overburdened mother struggling heroically to live up to her reputation for gentleness under the strain of ill or wayward children and an irritating husband? In what proportion are the beautiful homes of the novel written by spinsters or bachelors, or people who restrict the number of their children, or men whose posthumous biographies do not reveal a very sweet home life? I believe it was Carlyle who originated that fond boast that no nation in the world has a word for "home" like the English. It was certainly Dickens who gave us the most touching pictures of domestic tenderness and happiness. How many mothers of the working and lower middle class do not dread the holidays, when the children threaten to be near them all day? How many are capable of training children? How many do not regard a blow as the supreme moral agency? How

many would not welcome the easing of their burden, and the training of their children by experts? And why in the world should mothers be likely to have less affection for their children because they have infinitely less trouble with them, and see them only in their smiling hours?

The happiest phase of English home life is, surely, found in those middle-class families which can send the children away to school for four-fifths of the year and welcome them home periodically in the holiday mood. In the vast majority of cases the teacher has to struggle despairingly against the influence of the home and the street; for it is to the street that the mother entrusts the child. A lady (an educational expert) once observed to me that it was remarkable to find the children in Gaelic districts of Scotland speaking the purest English. On the contrary, it was wholly natural, and it points an important pædagogical moral. The children learned English *from their teachers only*; there was no corrupt English dialect in the home or village to undo the teacher's lessons. In other matters besides language the school-lessons are constantly frustrated outside the school.

I pass frequently through the stream of children pouring out of a large and handsome suburban school. It is not in a slum. There are broad green fields on every side, and there are vast and beautiful public spaces not far away. But the homes from which many of the children come are squalid, and the street-scenes, especially in front of the

local inn, are often disgusting. On more than one occasion I have heard the men openly talk of their practice of unnatural vice. I have seen a girl of ten watch her intoxicated father misconduct himself with a prostitute, while the mother—whose attention was called to the fact by the child, in the monosyllabic language of the district—chatted with a neighbour. And I am not surprised to notice that, when the children burst from school, which they hate, numbers of them break into foul language, indecent behaviour, and fighting. Their world, outside the school, is one mighty drag on the teacher's efforts. When they leave school, with brains half-developed and only the maxims of ancient Judæa (at which half their world scoffs) to guide their conduct, when they enter workshops and laundries and join the company of ring-eyed boys and girls in the first flush of sex-development, they shed the feeble influence of the school-lessons in a few months.

The district I have in mind is a very common type of district: a healthy, open suburb on the fringe of London, tainted by one of those older villages in which the poorest workers are apt to congregate. It has an expensive Church-Institute and numerous chapels. You may see the thing in almost any part of London, and most other towns. I have a vivid recollection of passing from a Catholic elementary school and strict home in Manchester to a large warehouse thirty-five years ago. There is little change in that respect to-day. A very few years ago a Manchester boy passed the same

way ; and a month or two later, his father told me, he returned home chuckling over a " funny story " about Christ. The school fails, not from lack of devotion in the teachers, but because the child learns more in the street, and often in the home ; and these lessons are, somehow, more congenial.

Now if we are not satisfied with this comparative waste of effort and sterility of result, we have to consider candidly the ambition of the educationist. He wants to turn out a young citizen with an active mind, a sound body, and a character prepared to resist the more degrading influences of the world he will enter. He cannot carry out this aim in the case of every child entrusted to him, but he can in most cases, if the State will help him. He must have his children properly nourished : neither underfed nor stuffed with coarse food by ignorant mothers. He must have them seasonably clothed and shod : again the mothers need instruction and pressure. He must have, not only drill and more natural forms of exercise, but more control over the children outside of school-hours ; he is already beginning, with great promise of good, to walk and play with them, to take them to museums, and so on. He must have adequate medical assistance, and must have the support of the law in counteracting dirty homes and careless parents. He must keep the child still a few years longer at school, because a child only begins to be really educable at thirteen or fourteen. He must have the encouragement of knowing that the more promising boys and girls

will find the avenue open to higher schools, and that the community will make some serious provision of mental stimulation for the adolescent and the adult. And in order to carry out properly this large and promising scheme of training he must have twice as many colleagues as he has, so that each may be able to give individual attention to pupils, and in order that too great demands be not made on their hours of rest.

But where are we to find the very large sums of money which would be required for carrying out such a scheme? I wish everybody in England realised that we should have the funds to carry out this scheme in its entirety, in its most advanced developments, if we abolished militarism; that if we had done this before 1914, we should have had, in the cost of the war, the funds to carry out such a scheme two or three times over. We have to reflect also whether the increased prosperity of England would not pay the cost. There are other considerations which I give later, but I would add here at least a word about experience in other lands. At New York and Chicago I visited schools—elementary and secondary, but both free—with which we have nothing to compare in this country: palatial structures with superb equipment and devoted staffs. Yet when I asked ratepayers how they contrived to spend so lavishly on education, the three or four public men I asked were so little conscious of a burden that they were unable to explain satisfactorily where the funds came from!

We are, however, making progress here and there,—Bradford, for instance, has had the courage to be quite Socialistic in its care of the young,—and the triple ideal of education is generally, if at times reluctantly, recognised. As far as the education of the body is concerned, in fact, we have no ground for quarrelling with our teachers, whatever we may say of some of our educational authorities. Medical inspection, drill, hygiene, play, excursions, feeding, etc., are discussed very conscientiously at every meeting of teachers, and the reforms proposed are more or less admitted in all places, even under the London County Council. The teachers themselves often go far beyond their prescribed tasks in endeavouring to help the children. In places they yield part of their necessary midday rest to attend to the feeding of poor children: which I found admirably, and most cheerfully and expeditiously, done in Chicago (where 1500 children at one school were quietly and excellently fed in thirty minutes) by a committee of ladies of the district. They give Saturdays and holidays for conducting visits to museums or excursions, or for controlling sports. What is chiefly needed is that the authorities should deal stringently with backward sectarian schools, and provide a very much larger supply of teachers and servants. The municipal authority of the richest city in the world—the London County Council—is scandalously stingy and reactionary in this respect.

When we turn to the question of educating the

intelligence, it is not possible to approve so cordially. No one, assuredly, can fail to appreciate the zeal and efforts of educationists and teachers, especially in the last few decades. Hardly any body of professional men and women among us, certainly no body of public servants, has a deeper and sounder ambition to conduct its work on the most effective lines. A vast literature is published, frequent congresses are held, and the science of psychology is assiduously cultivated. One must appreciate also the fatal limitations of the teacher's activity ; as long as we withdraw children from him at the age of fourteen, education is impossible. It may seem, therefore, ungracious or unwise to criticise,—though I am not wholly a layman in regard to education,—but there is at least one feature of our school life to which I would draw serious critical attention.

The general public is apt to express this feature resentfully by saying that the modern teacher “ crams.” Better informed critics have put it that modern education is little more than a process of “ encephalisation,” or the imprinting of certain facts on the child's brain almost as mechanically as the indenting of marks on the cylinder of a gramophone. Each of these criticisms implies an injustice. Educationists and teachers have, of course, discussed this very point for decades, and the present system is the formulation of their deliberate judgment. They still differ amongst themselves as to the proportion of memory-work and

stimulation-work, but it is too late in the day (if accurate at all) to tell teachers that to "educate" means "to draw out" the child's "faculties," not to put in. Every elementary teacher knows that he must train the child to think as well as furnish it with positive information. The point one may legitimately raise is whether the general educational practice represents a fair adjustment of the two functions.

It is essential in such disputes to have clear principles. What is the aim of education? The current phrase, "to make good citizens," is far too vague. A good citizen is, in a large employer's mind, a man who will work for two pounds a week and not annoy wealthier people by demanding more: in a clergyman's mind, one who goes to church. The point is serious and relevant, because there is a growing tendency among the middle and upper class to insist on a return to the ideal of the old Church of England school society: the children must not be educated in such a way that they will aspire above the station to which the Almighty has called them. As, however, the educationist will probably reply at once that his duty is to do all in his power to promote intelligence during such period as the State thinks advisable, we need not discuss the larger ideal of developing the child's powers on general humanitarian grounds.

But glance at the manuals which are used in our schools, and consider whether we have as yet realised the true ideal of education. These manuals,

and the methods employed, are the outcome of a hundred years of critical discussion, yet I venture to say that they need to be entirely rewritten. I pass over the infant-schools and earlier standards, where the first general ideas are carefully, and on the whole judiciously, implanted. As soon, however, as the child enters its teens, it is painfully overloaded with memory-work. I take, for example, the manuals of geography and history which are used in educating children of eleven in a first-class London secondary school. They are crammed with information which will never be of the least use to one man in ten thousand, and which we have no right whatever to impose on the young brain with so much necessary work to do.

The manual of early English history which I have before me is a characteristically modern production. Instead of the grim old paragraphs, in alternate large and small type, on which the eye of the child nearly always gazes with reluctance, there are vivid sketches of life in successive ages. There is danger, perhaps, that the child will pass to the opposite extreme, and take the manual as a story-book, a work of ephemeral interest; at least careful guidance will be needed to enable it to select the necessary material which is to be memorised. But the chief defect still is the overloading of the pages with matter of no serious usefulness. The doings of Ethelbert and Ethelfrith and Redwald and Penda and Offa, whose very names bewilder the young mind, are compressed

into a few forbidding paragraphs, instead of being relegated to the University. Later come Ethelwulf and Osburh and Ethelbald and Ethelbert ; and Sweyn Forkbeard and Olaf Trygvasson and Guhilda ; and Rhodri and Llywelyn and Griffith ap Rees and Own Gwynedd and Egfrith and Malcolm Canmore and John Baliol. How many of us know, or need to know, a word about them, and their families, and their battles ? Then the French wars are told in detail, and the pages bristle with dates and French names and genealogies ; and the Wars of the Roses introduce a new series of repellent and useless names and dates. The child, in a word, is enormously overburdened with stuff which we adults would refuse to commit to memory or even to read. Yet this is a very modern manual, the last word in the adaptation of history to the mind of a child of ten or eleven.

The manual of European geography, also, is one of the most modern and enlightened that a teacher can choose, but it imposes a mass of pedantic and useless knowledge. Isotherms and isobars and the freezing of the Oder and Vistula and Danube ; the navigability of the Ebro and Guadalquivir, and the wheat-growing areas of France and Spain, and the industries of Lille and Roubaix and Magdeburg and Lombardy and Smyrna ; in a word, fully one-third of the details in the little manual—the details which it is most difficult to remember, which tax the child's brain most, and will be forgotten soonest and with least loss—ought not to have been in-

served. The whole plan is academic and pedantic : it is built on the supposition that the child must have a summary of the kind of knowledge which a geographical expert would have to master. And in later years the child must laboriously cover the whole globe with the same unnecessary attention to useless details.

In mathematics, at least, the same criticism will hold. Geometry is, of course, no longer a mere task of memorisation ; but the positive knowledge of problems is not of the least use, save in a few exceptional cases, and the training of the mind might be achieved by lessons in natural science. In natural science itself one might quarrel with much of the material given : not one in ten thousand, for instance, will even remember in later years the elements of botany. But at least we are, in giving scientific information, training the young to inquire into the nature of positive reality and initiating them to branches of knowledge in which they can easily advance in later years, since we have so fine a popular literature of science, and the advance will be a considerable gain in their whole mental outlook. It is chiefly in regard to history and geography that time and labour might be spared, and more leisure given for ensuring that the child will assimilate the knowledge imparted. Mental energy should not be wasted in mastering an immense collection of facts which, experience shows, are certain to be forgotten within a few years.

I may also recall that, when we choose to carry

out the elementary reform of abolishing the plurality of tongues, a vast economy will be made in the curriculum, and really useful knowledge will be imparted more thoroughly and with finer attention to the texture of the child's brain. The academic plea, that there is excellent training in a thorough study of Latin and Greek, may be freely granted. But there is just as excellent a training in the thorough study of such branches of science as are fitted for the school, and the positive information gained is permanently useful.

If we thus eliminate languages and simplify geography and history we give the modern teacher a more hopeful opportunity. It is surely the universal experience that we forget nine-tenths of the geographical details we learn at school, and we find little inconvenience in re-learning such as we need to master in later years. A judicious outline-scheme, with more physiography and less of useless detail, and a fuller account of one's national geography (not because it describes the child's country, but because it is practical information) would suffice. The remainder, or part of it, could be imparted in technical training for commerce. History should be wholly remodelled. It is ludicrous to-day to make the child grow pale and worn over the past royal families and wars of England, and dismiss the general history of the race in a page or two. A fine scheme of the history, and even the prehistory and origin, of the human race, with so much fuller information about the child's

own country as is useful for the understanding of its institutions and monuments, could be imparted in less time, with more interest, and with far greater profit. The patriotic sham deeply vitiates our scheme of instruction and makes the training of the child scandalously one-sided and exacting. Germany has recently shown us the pernicious results of this political perversion of education.

Passing to the moral education of children, we at once find it cruelly distorted and enfeebled by a religious sham of the least defensible nature. Such moralists as Kant and Emerson hardly exaggerated the human importance of moral law, however much they failed to understand its human significance. Character is the pivot on which life turns. The general diffusion of fine qualities of character would transform the earth, quite apart from economic and political reform, and lead to a speedier settlement of our industrial and international difficulties. It is therefore of supreme importance to train the will or character of the child from its earliest years. Yet there is no other branch of our education, and hardly any other branch of our life, in which we tolerate so crude and ludicrous a pretence of work.

The education authority of the Metropolis of England would, one supposes, have the advantage of the finest expert advice in the world. Enter one of the thousands of schools under its control, however, and ask how the training of character is conducted. A teacher informs you that at college

he has learned only to impart "Biblical knowledge." He will show you a scheme of lessons founded on the Old and New Testament. The younger the child, the more preposterous the lesson. In the lower standards the child must learn the story of the Creation, the Fall, the Deluge, etc. It is still too young to imagine that its teacher may, at the command of our education authorities, be grossly deceiving it, or to perceive that these ancient Babylonian legends contain no particular incentive to virtue. When it passes to the higher standards it is initiated to some equally remarkable stories about the early history of mankind and the early conduct of the Deity. The teacher rarely believes these things, and it may be assumed that men like Mr. Sidney Webb, who voted for this scheme of education in the L.C.C., do not. If the child has intelligence enough to raise the question of veracity, it must be snubbed or deceived. A London teacher told me that on one occasion, when he had described some of the remarkable proceedings of the Israelites in ancient Palestine, a precocious youngster asked: "Please, sir, is it true?" Our education authorities forbid him to reply to such a question. Indeed, his headmaster was a Nonconformist (very zealous for Bible lessons), and would find a way to punish any departure from the appointed untruths.

The lessons from the New Testament are, it is true, devoid of this atmosphere of Oriental animalism, ferocity, and superstition which clings to the

Old Testament lesson, but here again the teacher is forced to violate the elementary principles of education. He must gravely tell the story of the miraculous birth, the crucifixion, and the resurrection of Christ. He probably knows that some of the most learned divines in England and other countries regard these stories as false, but he must deliberately and solemnly tell the young that Christ was God and that these things are written in the "Word of God." He must repeat parables which we know to have been borrowed (and often spoiled in the borrowing) from the Jewish rabbis, yet teach that this was the unique feature of Christ's preaching. He must use all his ingenuity to wring a moral lesson out of the parables of the workers in the vineyard, the royal banquet, and so on. He must keep up this elaborate deception of the child until it leaves his care; and he knows that, in nine cases out of ten in London or any large city, the child is already hearing on all sides sneers at these ancient myths, and laughing at the system which inculcates them in the name of all that is most sacred.

The aim of our London authorities, and education authorities generally in England, is not to train character, but to teach the contents of the Bible. Why a civic authority should include the teaching of the Bible no man knows; and whether a civic authority can be indifferent to the truth or untruth of the lessons it imposes few seem to ask. Mr. Sidney Webb, endorsing these lessons, said that

the Bible was "great literature"; and scores of our parochial legislators, who were not generally known to admire great literature (but *were* known to have numbers of Nonconformist constituents), fervently repeated the phrase. Does the child appreciate or hear a single word about the literary qualities of the Bible? Does a literary lesson need to be a deliberate lesson in untruth? Can we find no great literature which has not the taint of untruth?

Dr. Clifford says that these lessons tend to make "good citizens." It is not at first sight apparent why we should go to the literature of an ancient, mendacious, polygamous, and bloodthirsty tribe for lessons in citizenship in a modern civilisation. Let us suppose, however, that the ingenious teacher has wrung a moral of truthfulness, fraternity, respect for women, self-reliance, and universal justice out of these peculiar records of ancient Judæa. Follow the child, in imagination, into the later years of citizenship. He hardly leaves the school before he learns that the whole Biblical scheme is very generally ridiculed, and is rejected even by large numbers of learned theologians. Before many years, at least, he is fairly sure to learn this. The prescriptions of the Sermon on the Mount he, of course, never had the slightest intention of observing. The teacher, even while he reads the quixotic counsels, knows, and possibly notes with approval, that the boy's code is: "If any smite thee on the one cheek, smite him forthwith on both." But the boy now learns that from the Creation to the

Resurrection the whole story is seriously disputed and is rejected by the majority of well-educated people. He looks back on his " Bible lessons " and his teacher with derision, and he discards the whole authority of his code of conduct. Surely an admirable foundation for virtue and citizenship !

Into the larger question of the relation of religious education and crime I cannot enter here. I have shown elsewhere that France, Victoria, and New Zealand, the countries with longest experience of secular education, have the best record among civilised nations in the reduction of crime. The carelessness of clerical writers as to the truth of their statements on this subject is appalling. There is not a tittle of reason in criminal statistics, or any other exact indications of national health, for retaining religious lessons in our schools. They are there merely because the clergy find it conducive to their prestige to have their sacred book enthroned with honour in the national scheme of education. As in the case of divorce, they ask us to maintain immorality in the name of religion. German schools are saturated with religious teaching, yet we have seen the issue of it all.

For one hundred years our English school-system has been hampered and perverted by this clerical insistence on religious lessons. Parents, they sometimes say, desire it ; but when the Trades Union Congress, the only large body of parents which ever pronounced on the subject, repeatedly voted for secular education, by overwhelming

majorities, the clergy, through the minority of their followers, could only secure the exclusion of the subject from the agenda. Neither do the majority of teachers desire it; while educationists, as a whole, resent this grievous complication of their work. Nothing but the complete secularisation of all schools receiving funds from the nation or municipality will enable us to advance. The clergy must do their own work on their own premises. The moral pretext is a thin disguise of an effort to use the nation's resources and authority for the purpose of attaching children to the churches.

Writers on the subject are not wholly agreed whether we ought to substitute moral lessons for the discarded Bible lessons. We can in such a matter proceed only on probabilities, and it seems to me that judicious lessons for the training of character are very desirable. I do not so much mean abstract or direct lessons on the various qualities of character. If such lessons (on truthfulness, honesty, manliness, etc.) were tactfully and sensibly conducted, they could be of great service. There is really not much danger of turning the average British schoolboy into a prig. But indirect lessons, especially from history and biography, should be more effective.

In either case our teachers would need special training for the lessons, and no philosophic or religious or anti-religious view of moral principles should be admitted. Experience has surely shown how little use there is in giving children a "cate-

gorical imperative," or a set of arbitrary commands, or an æsthetic lesson on "modesty." You cannot in one hour teach the child to think, and in the next expect it to accept your instruction without thinking, because you are not prepared to give reasons for your commands. It is sometimes forgotten that even children share the mental awakening of our age, and must be treated wisely. The American or the Australian child well illustrates the change that is taking place. It is increasingly dangerous to give children dogmatic or mystic instruction in rules of conduct, nor is it in the least necessary to base this important part of their training on disputable grounds. Every quality of character that is inculcated may be related to the child's actual or future experience of life, and will find an ample sanction therein. Life is full of material for such lessons: material far richer and easier of assimilation than the doings of an ancient Oriental people with a different code of morals. Let these lessons of history and contemporary life be developed, let the child learn in plain human speech the social significance of justice and honour, avoiding namby-pamby dissertations on the beauty of virtue, and there will be placed in the mind of the young, not an exotic plant which the child will be tempted to eradicate, but a germ which will grow and bear fruit under the influence of its own experience.

The modern ideal of education further implies that the State shall provide higher tuition for those

youths and maidens to whom it will be profitable to impart it. Scholastic evolution is advancing so rapidly in this direction that the ideal hardly needs vindication. Seventeen hundred years ago such a "ladder of education" existed in Europe; from the municipally-endowed elementary school the promising youth could pass, through secondary colleges, to the imperial schools at Rome. Had that model been retained and improved instead of being abandoned for fourteen centuries, Europe would be in an immeasurably greater state of efficiency than it is. We are restoring and improving the pagan model, and there are signs that in time we shall have a complete system of secondary, technical, and higher education, quite apart from the schools in which the children of more or less wealthy parents learn their traditional virtues and vices. If we have also some means by which able children whose talent has escaped the academic eye (of which we have many classical instances) may in later years have a chance of recognition, we shall exploit the intelligence of the race with splendid results.

The cost of this great reform need not intimidate us. Enormous sums of money have been given (by men like Mr. Carnegie) or bequeathed for the purpose, and the admirable practice will continue. But we need a searching revision of educational endowments, foundations, scholarships, etc. There is strong reason to suspect that estates which are now of great value are not applied to the scholastic

purposes for which they were intended, or are badly administered, or are used in giving gratuitous or cheap education to the children of comfortable parents who secure favour or influence. A consolidation of all the endowments which had not in their origin an express sectarian purpose would provide a fund to which the State and municipal authorities need add little. The scheme would bring some order into our chaos of schools and colleges, and, while the more snobbish establishments would continue to preserve their pupils from the society of the children of tradesfolk, and would waste valuable resources on uncultivable minds, the youth of the nation generally, of both sexes, would be developed to the full extent of its capacity. These things have a monetary value. A distinguished historical writer told me that, on sending his son to Sandhurst, he proposed that they should study together the campaigns of Napoleon. The youth presently informed him that the traditions of Sandhurst did not allow them to do serious work outside the general routine. A few years later we heard the details of our South African War.

It will be a part of this increased efficiency to rid our secondary and higher schools of clerical domination. It is futile to say that the clergyman must represent morals and religion in the school. His record as a moralist during fifteen hundred years does not recommend his services. Even to-day public schools which retain the tradition of clerical masters are deplorable from the moral point of

view. Some of them are nurseries of a vice which, unless it be discontinued when the youth goes out into the world, may bring on him one of the most degrading sentences of our penal law. The clerical *method* of character-training—one admits, of course, great occasional personalities—has little influence on these things. Public-school boys, and especially young men at our universities, know that every syllable which the preacher addresses to them is disputed, and no other ground of right and healthy conduct is, as a rule, impressed on them. Many will know that the grossest opinion of the clergy themselves is current in our public schools and older universities, and is embodied in numbers of scurrilous stories. The position of the clergyman in our educational world is false. He is there for the same reason that the Bible is in the elementary school: in the interest of the Churches. We have improved mental education enormously since it ceased to be a monopoly of the clergy. Possibly we will make a similar improvement in character-training; we can hardly do it with less success than they have done.

CHAPTER IX

THE EDUCATION OF THE ADULT

IF it be granted that it is the interest and the duty of a nation to develop the intelligence of its people, we must conclude that the work is only half done, or not half done, by even an ideal system of what is commonly called education. I am assuming that a time will come when no youth or maiden will enter workshop or office before the age of seventeen, if not eighteen; and that the better endowed minority of our children will, without regard to their private resources, be promoted to secondary, technical, and higher schools. This minority will, on the whole, need no further attention. Cultural interest and professional stimulation will ensure that their studies continue. But the majority will fall lamentably short of the ideal of developed and alert intelligence. The added three or four years will be enormously valuable to the teacher, but in the majority of cases the intellectual interest will still be so feeble that the distractions of life will at once extinguish it.

If we speak of our actual world, not of an ideal world, this fact is too patent to need proving.

Forty-five years ago a band of enthusiasts fought for the establishment of universal elementary education. The survivors of that band confess that the splendid results they anticipated have not been secured. One is, indeed, tempted sometimes to wonder whether there was not more zeal for culture among the workers half a century ago than there is to-day. When you listen to a conversation, of workers or of average middle-class people, on politics or theology or some other absorbing topic, you are astounded at the slender amount of personal thinking and the slavery to phrases which they have heard. Their minds seem to resemble the screen of a kaleidoscope, on which the coloured phrases they have read in journals or cheap literature weave automatic patterns. I speak, of course, of the mass. I have given hundreds of scientific lectures to keen audiences of working men, and I know that tens of thousands of them have excellent collections of familiar books. But the result of forty-five years of education is far from satisfactory. It was thought that, when the people learned to read, and the ideas of an Emerson or a Darwin could be appropriated by any man of moderate endowment, the level of the race would rise materially. It has not risen as much as was expected. The phrases are learned and repeated: the ideas are not vitally assimilated, because the intellect is not sufficiently developed.

Two classes of people will impatiently retort that there is no need for further development. One

class consists of those who dread a higher intelligence in the workers because it leads to discontent with their condition. To which one may reply that this concern comes too late. One needs little intelligence to perceive the inequalities of the distribution of wealth. The workers of the world have perceived it, and, although only an extreme Socialist minority demands equalisation, the mass of the workers demand a higher reward. Midway between Australia and England, on the deck of a liner, I heard a group of middle-class men and women contrasting the menace of the Australian workers with the industrial content of the mother-country. We landed, to find from the journals that the whole United Kingdom was punctuated by strikes, agitations, and demands. It is too late. A distinguished Belgian prelate was taken into a large foundry, and, observing the workers, he impulsively cried : " What a slave's life ! " " Hush, they will hear you," said the manager. In repeating the experience he added : " They have heard : it is too late." It will be better now if, in the industrial struggle of the future, there is intelligence as well as principle on both sides. If any large proportion of work in the human economy requires the sacrifice of the intelligence, there is something wrong with the work.

Curiously enough, the other class of people who are impatient of the design to stimulate their minds consists of the mass of the workers themselves. After eight or nine or ten hours of heavy

muscular work every day, they say, they have no inclination or fitness for serious literature, serious lectures, or serious art. They prefer a drink, a bioscope, a music-hall. Eight hours' work, eight hours' play, eight hours' sleep; that is the ideal. A very natural and symmetrical ideal, but—it is just the ideal which "the capitalist" wishes them to cultivate, and this might suggest reflection. Someone will do the thinking while they play. Democratic government is a mischief and a blunder unless Demos is capable of thinking. If the workers of the world have an ambition to control their destinies, they must realise that their destinies are things too large and complex and important to be controlled by men with sleepy brains. There is no solution of the broad social problem of this planet which does not imply that every adult man and woman, of normal powers, shall be alert and informed and self-assertive enough to take an intelligent part in its administration.

Therefore, it seems to many that a scheme of education which ceases to operate at the age of fourteen, which teaches children to read and has no further concern with what they read, which impresses on their cortex a mass of facts of no utility or stimulation, is not a fulfilment of a nation's duty, or a proper consideration of a nation's interest. The grander lessons of history, the more impressive truths of science, the vital features of economics and sociology, the ennobling characters of fine art, cannot be even faintly impressed on the young

mind. Yet they can be impressed on the minds of nearly all adults, and it would be an incalculable gain to the race if they were. What is being done, and what might be done, to effect this ?

The nation at present leaves it to commercial interest and to philanthropy to carry out, in some measure, this important function, and we may at once eliminate the commercial interest. It supplies, at a proper profit, what is demanded. A minority ask for cheap works of science and art and history, and several admirable series of manuals and serial publications are supplied. A majority, an overwhelming majority, asks only to be entertained, and there is a mighty flood of novels and amusing works, a rich crop of music-halls and bioscope-shows and theatres and skating rinks. It will readily be understood that, regarding happiness as the ultimate ideal, I regard entertainment as a proper part of life. The comedian and the storyteller and the professional football-player are rendering good service, and it is intellectual snobbery to murmur that they "merely entertain" people. A good deal of nonsense is written about sport and entertainment. Many of us can, with pleasant ease, suspend a severely intellectual task for a few hours to witness a first-class football match. One wonders if some of the ascetics who speak about "muddled oafs" and "the football craze" are aware that the game (except for professional players) occupies merely an hour and a half a week (or alternate week) for little more than half a year.

The mischief is that so much of our entertainment appeals to and fosters a state of mind or taste which does exclude culture. We have to-day an army of puritan scouts, watching our music-halls and cinematograph films, our picture-cards and novels, our open spaces by night and our bathing-beaches by day, calculating minutely what amount of dress or undress or sexual allusion they may permit. Certainly we need coercion in these matters. No one who moves amongst our average people, in any rank of society, can fail to recognise that there would be in time a volcanic outpour of sexuality if we did not impose restriction. Whether this chaste pruriency of the modern Churches is an admirable thing, and whether its hirelings are a desirable supplement to the police-force, need not be discussed here ; but what amuses one is their intense zeal to detect the narrowest fringe of impropriety and their utter obtuseness to graver matters. I have sometimes, when waiting before a lecture in the dressing-room of a variety theatre, been confronted with a notice that " the curtain will be rung down on any artist who says ' Damn ' or mentions the lodger," or, more candidly (in the Colonies) : " Don't swear. We don't care a damn, but the public does." The general public would, if it were consulted, probably make the same reply as the framers of the notice, and would blame the police for the restriction of liberty. There is, in a word, an appalling poverty of taste in the general public, and it pays the purveyor of entertainment

to adapt his wares to it as far as the police will permit. To this lamentable lack of taste and culture (in the broad sense) officials and moralists are entirely indifferent as long as the *comédienne* does not refer to the seventh commandment. The public may be as ignorant and vulgar as they like, but they must not give expression to a natural effect of this.

The music-hall and the bioscope are the great academies of our people to-day, and their work is largely stupefying. Sentimental songs of the most vapid description alternate with patriotic songs of a medieval crudeness and humorous songs which might have appealed to a prehistoric intelligence. Blood-thirsty melodramas, sensational scenes, and infinite variations of "The girl who did what we are forbidden to talk about," evoke and inflame elementary emotions at the lowest grade of culture. Clergymen give certificates of high moral efficacy to crude representations of passion in high life which are designed to appeal to raw feelings. The posters alone—the eccentric costumes and daubed faces and attempts at novelty in the way of leering—warn away people of moderate taste or intelligence. The bioscope is almost as bad. Apart from a few excellent travel and scenic and scientific pictures, the show is a mass of crude faking and boorish horse-play which presupposes an elementary intelligence in the spectators. Pictorial post-cards add to the monstrosities and puerilities of this kind of public education, and a large proportion of the

stories published, especially in the periodicals which are read by girls and boys and uneducated women, fall in the same category. We may trust that the idea will not occur to anyone of making a collection of our picture-cards, films, music-hall posters, novelties, etc., for preservation as typical amusements of the twentieth century.

It is stupid to watch this lamentable exposure of our low average of culture week by week with complete indifference until more underclothing is displayed than we think proper. The bioscope and music-hall—I speak of the majority—are not merely entertaining ; they are undoing the work of the educator. They are fostering the raw and primitive emotions which it is the task of education to refine and bring under control, debasing public taste, and appealing to a standard which is essentially unintellectual. The idea that fun may be utterly stupid and crude, provided it is “clean,” is the idea of a narrow-minded fanatic, an enemy of society.

When we pass to the next cultural level of entertainment—the better music-hall, the metropolitan type of theatre, the concert, the novel, etc.—we have a vast provision of entertainment which amuses or interests without cultural prejudice ; rising at times to a positive measure of artistic education or intellectual stimulation. Two things only need be noticed here. The first is the stupidity of the kind of censorship which we tolerate ; of which little need be said, since it is generally recognised. The amateur moral censorship of art reaches

the culmination of its absurdity in our dramatic inquisition. The dramatist may deal with sex-passion as pruriently and provokingly as he likes, provided he leaves enough to the spectator's facile imagination; but he must not attempt to raise love as an intellectual issue. Our people may feel love: they must not think about it as a serious problem.

The other, and more needed observation, regards the novel. There are novels of fine artistic value, like those of Phillpotts: novels of great intellectual use, like those of Wells: and novels of a general and more subtle educational value, like those of Meredith. There are novels which, like the melodrama, counteract education by their low standard of art and intelligence, and there are novels—the great majority—which entertain without prejudice. Since we have as much right to be entertained as to be instructed, novel-reading is a normal part of a normal life. Seeing, however, that a very large proportion of the community read nothing but novels, it has been felt that the novel might be used as a vehicle of instruction, and the didactic or historical novel has become an institution. Many believe that they are being educated when they read this literature.

Against this comforting assumption it is necessary to protest. Even the greatest historical novelists, Dumas and Scott, have taken remarkable liberties with the known facts, and added to the picture of the time a mass of imaginative detail. Many

historical novels, like *Quo Vadis* or Kingsley's *Hypatia*, misrepresent personalities or periods for controversial purposes; and the bulk of modern historical novels are worthless jumbles of fact and imagination. It is, as a rule, the same with the sociological novel. You must know the facts in advance—you must know where the facts end and the fiction begins—or else merely regard the book as a form of entertainment. Lately I read a serious historical work, by a distinguished writer, in which Hypatia (who was fifty or sixty years old when she was murdered) is described as a "girl-philosopher"; clearly because Kingsley, for controversial purposes, thought fit in his novel to make her a young and rather foolish maiden. Thousands of people take their convictions from "novels with a purpose," especially religious or sociological novels, without reflecting that the author may legitimately give them either fact or fiction. Such novels are often profoundly mischievous. A conscientious didactic novelist like Mr. Wells aims rather at raising issues and stimulating reflection, and in this Mr. Wells has done splendid service. Others have done equal dis-service, and have used artificially constructed characters for the purpose of raising prejudice against certain ideas, or have misled by a calculated mixture of fact and fiction. It was in recommending to the public one of these novels—an exceptionally silly and crude piece of work—that the ^{W.}~~B.~~ Bishop of London described Christianity as "woman's best friend."

Religious literature is particularly offensive in this respect, but I will give special consideration to it later. Our press-criticism of books is a very imperfect system of checking the vagaries and prejudices of authors. The criticisms are very frequently marked by ignorance of the subject and by personal or doctrinal hostility to the author, while the more learned and conscientious journals often show the most ludicrous pedantry. I once published a novel, pseudonymously, and was amused to read in a London weekly, which takes great pride in the smartness of its reviews, that the author had neither an elementary knowledge of the art of writing nor an elementary acquaintance with the subject on which he wrote. I had already at that time written about twenty volumes, and I had had twelve years' intimate experience of the monastic life with which the book was concerned. Mr. Clement Shorter, not knowing the author, had generously described the book as "a brilliant novel." On another occasion an historical work of mine was gravely censured, though no specific errors were noted in it, by our leading literary organ, on the ground that I was not an expert on the period. I looked up the same journal's critique of a work written on the same historical period by an academic authority, and published by his university, and I found that, though there were dozens of errors in the work, it had passed the censor with full honours. I add with pleasure that some of the most generous notices of my works have appeared in papers (such as *The*

Daily Telegraph and *The Spectator*) to which my ideas must be repugnant. But most literary men agree with me that reviewing is, to a large extent, prejudiced and incompetent, and few of us would cross a room to read ordinary press-notices of our books.

One might extend this criticism to the general work of the press as the great popular educator. We must, however, reflect that the press is hampered by restrictions which the public ought to bear in mind : a journal is always a commercial transaction with a particular section of the public, and it is generally pledged to political partisanship. It is only just to remark that this materially restricts the educational ambition of many journalists. The public themselves are to blame that a large section of our press devotes so much space to sensational murders, adulteries, burglaries, royal births and marriages, wars and other crimes and follies. Sunday journals often contain twenty columns of this rubbish, and the worst parts of it are, with the most disgusting hypocrisy, thrust into prominence by especially large head-lines announcing "A Painful Case." One imagines the working man spending five or six hours of the Sabbath reading this sort of stuff. Great and grave things, which he ought to know, are happening all over the world, but he must have sharp eyes if he is to catch the obscure little paragraphs which—if there is any reference at all—tell him how many have been put to death in Russia in the last quarter, or how the

republican experiment fares in Portugal, or how democracy advances in Australia or the United States. The space is needed for pictures of burned mansions and notorious murderers and the commonplace relatives of politicians, for verbatim reports of divorce and criminal cases, for inquests and royal processions, and for the magnificent speeches of Cabinet Ministers and would-be Cabinet Ministers.

This stricture applies to the press generally. How far it sacrifices to these meretricious purposes the serious function of educating the public has been painfully impressed on us by recent experience. Only one or two journals in England surpassed our drowsy politicians in sagacity and foresight. Though an extensive reader of German literature (scientific and historical), it had never been my business to follow political or military utterances; yet, when the war broke out and I looked back on Germany's enormous output in this department, I realised that there had been in London for a year or two enough German literature to convince any moderate observer that war was fast approaching—and this was only a fragment of an enormously larger literature. Our press had ridiculed the one or two men and journals who warned the public of the danger. Further, when it transpired that our Government had met the crisis with painful slowness and inefficiency, nearly the whole press again conspired to check criticism, and it is probable that when the war is over the press will unite with the Churches in cultivating a foolish and dangerous

contentment on the part of the public. Our press is, in fact, very largely an instrument of our corrupt party-system. It never initiates reform, and it mirrors, day by day, all the crimes and follies and maladies of our social order without the least resentment or the faintest suggestion of reconstruction. Journals are constantly appearing with the professed intention of correcting these defects, yet they are almost invariably spoiled by illiberalism in one or more departments of their work, or by gross exaggerations, hysterical language, or impracticable proposals.

All this is a reflection of the generally low state of public culture, and it will not alter until we devote serious care to the education of the general intelligence. We begin at school to cultivate the child's imagination, though it is the quality of a child's mind which least requires stimulating and is most in need of subordinating to intelligence. In later years, when the feeble intellectual stimulation we have given is exhausted, we have to appeal to the imagination or go unheard. "I have not read a book since I left school," a music-hall artist observed to me. At twenty-five he had become incapable of doing more than look at illustrations, as he had done in his childhood. We go on until we make the imagination itself feeble on its constructive side. Miles of generally dauby and grotesque posters line our streets; tons of the trashiest literature for the young are discharged from marble palaces in the neighbourhood of Fleet Street; novels multiply

until the general public takes the words author and novelist to be synonymous ; and the daily organ of the millions tends more and more to be a collection of pictures of unimportant events and persons, with a very slender and peculiar quantity of news.

If we agree that democracy will advance until the majority rule in reality, and not merely in theory, these things must concern us. It is of little use to point to the occasional periodical with small circulation which endeavours to educate, to the occasional educative column in more important journals, or to the occasional lecture or serious concert or drama. The broad fact remains that our future rulers are increasingly encouraged to refrain from mental cultivation, to mistake an appeal to the imagination for knowledge, and to debase their taste more and more with raw representations of crime and passion. The working man reads with indignation of fashionable ladies struggling to find a place in court when a man is being tried for a series of sordid murders ; and the working man then reads, day after day, a three-column verbatim report of the trial, and regrets that there is not more of it.

In order to meet this grave public need an earlier generation invented night-schools and Mechanics' Institutes. Many of these still do useful work, but their number shrinks rather than increases. The Co-operative Movement, again, set up in the early days a fine ambition to educate its adult members, but this ambition has not been generally

sustained in the vast modern movement. Hundreds of lecture-societies were founded, and hundreds (about seven hundred in Great Britain, I believe) exist to-day and do some excellent work ; but many of the societies which adhered most faithfully to the educational ideal are in difficulties or extinct. The travel-lecture or funny lecture and the " popular " concert encroach more and more on the serious programme. Free libraries were another hope of the reformers of the last generation, and they are now endowed by millionaires and maintained by municipalities. They exhibit, perhaps, the saddest perversion of social ambition. Neither Mr. Carnegie nor any serious municipality thinks it a duty to provide gratuitous entertainment, but at least two-thirds of their resources are really devoted to this. The enormously greater part of the work of free libraries is to beguile the idle hours of young men and the idle days of young women with novels that rarely contain a particle of intellectual stimulation.

Public museums were another device for educating the mass of the people, and they have largely failed. There has been in recent years a little more regard for the public, as well as for students, but it is still painful to see crowds passing with bovine eyes amidst our accumulated treasures. The grouping and labelling are still too academic : the general scheme and the immense wealth of detail daze the eye of the inexpert. More guides and lecturers, in touch with and informally accessible to the

public, and a closer association with University Extension and Gilchrist and other lectures, are very much needed. Saturday afternoon in the British Museum is a melancholy spectacle of wasted wealth. A small model museum, designed solely for the education of the general public, would be more useful in this respect than our magnificent national museum. Unfortunately, the small museums copy the academic defects of the larger. The curator of one, on whom I urged the needs of the public, replied wearily: "Well, it will take me three years to arrange my Cephalopods, and then I will see what I can do."

We need a comprehensive and serious organisation and development of our resources for educating the adult. Our Education Department needs to throw out a new wing with the purpose of preventing the utter waste of its work upon young children. Institutions like the British Museum ought to be relieved of the control of the Archbishop of Canterbury and one or two other somnolent gentlemen, and made the centre of a splendid and energetic system of popular instruction and stimulation. From such centres the educational officials (as distinct from learned curators and youths from Oxford and Cambridge who look upon the public as a nuisance) might issue attractive invitations and publications, and be prepared to welcome the non-student, either with "showmen" who understand the public mind or by a general and affable accessibility of the whole staff. Municipal

museums and libraries and picture-galleries could be organised on similar lines by the Department, and useful private foundations, such as the Bishopsgate Institute, could be invited to co-operate, without interference in their management. The supply of novels ought to be restricted to the great masters of every country and a few moderns. The rich supply of serious literature ought to be made attractive and easily accessible to the public by good bibliographical guidance and constant lectures. These things are, of course, being done. It is not so much the local officials one quarrels with as the nation and its leaders. We want an immense co-ordination and development of our resources and efforts out of national funds. Lecture-societies and all kinds of educative centres and institutes—there are thousands in the country—need to be affiliated, encouraged, advised, and supplemented. The State should not even shrink from publishing. The trade supplies only the actual demand: the State must create a new and larger demand. Music would be an integral part of this scheme of education, and here again we have a large material ready for organisation.

Any man who has engaged in the work of educating and stimulating the general public will realise how urgently some such scheme is needed, and how splendid a service it would render. He will realise also that the task will be formidable. I do not for a moment conceive the general public as thirsting for culture. That is very largely due to the

way in which the work has hitherto been done. The recent success of small but authoritative manuals of science and history, and of several cheap series of literary works of high value, shows that a fairly large public responds to every enlightened effort to assist them. It will become very much larger when the work is organised on a national scale and conceived as a really important function of the State. That even then the majority of the nation would rush to the reconstructed libraries and museums and lecture or concert-halls no one will imagine for a moment. We do not undo in a few years the effect of centuries of evil traditions. I am assuming, however, that these various reforms I am discussing will proceed more or less simultaneously, and will enormously assist each other. The abolition of war would release rich funds for educational purposes: the reorganisation of industry would provide a little more leisure and capacity for mental recreation: other reforms would give a general intellectual stimulation. Even now, however, much of this work could be done. If we think it sufficient that our people remain in a condition of elementary literacy and half-developed intelligence, if we fancy that the *race* will advance because it sets aside a special caste of scholars for the promotion of culture, we may regard our actual situation without concern. But if we desire that general alertness of mind and decision of character which a democratic rule implies, we cannot be indifferent. Aristocrats justly rail at the democracy

of Athens and Rome ; it was an uneducated democracy—literate, but uneducated, like ours. We need to advance, if we are not to recede ; and the uplifted race of the days to come will honour the generation that taught men the compatibility of culture and entertainment.

I am speaking, in the main, of the mass of the workers, but it would be entirely unjust to insinuate that they alone need adult education. The conventions of social life, the extraordinary slavery to fashions and artificial rules, betray an intellectual flabbiness in the wealthier members of society which just as urgently calls for stimulation. We seem at times quite incapable of drawing a line between acts of real courtesy and taste, which imply a certain grace or delicacy of character, and conventional usages which have no rational basis. The insistence on these conventional usages is part of that general slavery to false traditions which I am assailing.

The most flagrant instance of this weakness of mind and character is the docility with which we meet changes of fashion in dress, or retain eccentric forms of clothing. Hardly any other feature so strongly impresses the close observer with the fact that the race, as a whole (and I speak only of civilised communities), advances little in intelligence and self-possession in spite of the progress made by its intellectual experts. One would say that here, especially, we need a strong draught of the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche,—the

gospel of self-assertion, of strong personality, of severe reasoning,—but I have not observed that our modern Nietzscheans differ much from their neighbours in such matters. Yet the commercial expansion of modern times is making this tyranny of fashion more ludicrous than it ever was before.

The fashion-plates and descriptions contained in ladies' journals have always provoked the furtive smile of the male. A coterie of tradesmen, who are eager to promote business, and of wealthy ladies who are equally eager to show that their purses are unlimited, decree that the hat or costume shall continually vary in shape and colour. The Anglo-French jargon of the sartorial journalist then impresses on a larger circle of ladies the need of alertness and the horror of being *démodée*,—it would be proof of incapacity to say "out of fashion,"—and, as the season approaches, the proclamation of the forthcoming colour or model is awaited with more feverish anxiety than the announcement of the national budget. Schools of artists are secretly inventing some variation—the wider the variation the better—on the thousands of costumes which have already graced the feminine frame, or discussing bold suggestions of reviving an ancient model which has long disappeared even from the shops of wardrobe-dealers. Privileged ladies rise in prestige by obtaining and whispering advance information. At length the shop-windows blaze with the new colour, the journals depict an ingenious

new combination of edges and folds and puckers, and womanhood plunges to the bottom of its purse with an eagerness to avoid the suspicion of financial stringency; while the discarded hats and dresses percolate romantically through lower strata of society. Is it not good for trade?

The masculine smile is, however, wearing thinner, as the absurd despotism is now almost as great among the stronger sex. Here also a group of commercial mathematicians evolve, every few months, a new combination of brim and crown and curve, and artists design new patterns of cloth and new contours of garment, and tyrannical journalists hold up to public execration the man of means or position who dares to find last year's fashion sufficiently comfortable or decorative. "Not worn now, sir," says the shopman, with indulgent smile, when you go to renew the hat or coat that has pleased you. The bewildering thing is, not that manufacturers should be eager to sell us new garments every few weeks, but that we bow with such docility to this ludicrous fiction of monarchy. Long trousers or short trousers, creased trousers or turned-up trousers, tight coats or loose coats, bowlers or trilbys—we listen submissively to the mandate, without the least consideration of our appearance or convenience.

Indeed, the only things that are permanent in this extravagant procession of fashions are the things that are ugly, inconvenient, or unhealthy, especially on the masculine side. The silk hat

and the hard felt hat linger as if in these extraordinary creations the manufacturer had discovered the ideal head-covering. The swallow-tail coat survives as if æsthetics could advance no further in the attiring of wealthy men; even the buttons at the back, to which our fiery ancestor attached his sword, must not be abandoned. The more comfortable dinner-jacket remains a privileged client at the gate until some audacious peer or prince will dispel the oppressive reverence for the ancient swallow-tail; and peers and princes know how dangerous it is to tamper with the spirit of reverence. The starched collar and shirt are as rigidly prescribed as sacred vestments on high occasions. The lady must still hang a thick and heavy screen of cloth from her hips; first having it made too long and then holding it up with her hand in order to escape the rich organic deposit on our streets and the filth with which we suffer "domestic pets" to make our squares hideous. Her abdominal organs must, if one may credit the marvellous photographs published by the corset-makers, be reconstructed every few years to accommodate the latest scheme of body-curves. And from these upper reaches of our intellectual world, the tyranny descends through level after level of the community until it lays its last stern injunctions on the junior clerk and the post-office assistant; or passes beyond the seas and compels the Chinaman or the Japanese to discard his beautiful robe in favour of a frock-coat and silk hat, or a

striped tweed and bowler, when he presents himself at the entrance-gate to civilisation.

We find an almost equally ludicrous tyranny of tradition or fashion in almost every part of the ritual of social life. Twenty years ago I issued from a rite-bound monastery into the free life of the world, to find it similarly swathed in ritual bonds. I purchased, and stealthily mastered, the "ceremonial" (as we used to call our rite-book) of this new world—a book on "etiquette"—and led for some months a strenuous and exacting life. I entered drawing-rooms with a nervous recollection of about a score of rules that had to be observed in the first five minutes, while the ritual of the mundane table entailed for a long time a good deal of furtive observation of my fellows and trembling under the butler's eye. To this day I am not quite clear at what precise angle the elbow must stand in shaking hands. Social life is overspread by a network of these prescriptions of the unwritten law or the judicial decisions of the aristocracy which we call "manners." There is, as a rule, so little discrimination between the formal rules of an artificial code and the real impulses of a gentlemanly nature that one has often to listen gravely and silently while ladies commend the "perfect manners" of a man whom one knows to be an adventurous ninny or a beast.

We need a new conception of civilisation, a sustained stimulation of the intelligence throughout life, a strong infusion of the Nietzschean gospel of

personality and self-assertion. Some day we shall regard education as half of the nation's serious business, and will devote half our national revenue to it. Let it not be imagined that this suggests a generation of dour and frightfully serious people who never smoke or play bridge. I omit the function of entertainment only because it has never been neglected. The supreme business of a State is to make its people happy, strong, and prosperous. We shall approach the ideal when we abolish war and reduce pauperism and crime by registering all workers, organising all industry, reforming justice and the penal system, and removing the morally diseased.

In those days education will be a vast, humane, scientific scheme for guiding the growth of human embryos into industrious and orderly citizens, and enabling the adult citizen pleurably to cultivate his mind and taste. The development of each child will be followed as the development of a pupil is followed in the Jesuit Society, but with a care to develop its individuality fully, in harmony with the individualities of others. The child will not pass from the sphere of the educator at puberty, with unformed mind and character, to swell the great army of the intellectually listless. Ruskin's noble ideal of "as many as possible full-breathed, bright-eyed, and happy-hearted human creatures" will replace the narrow standards of our Education Department, with which the child can have no sympathy. From the first dawn of intelligence it

will feel that a well-wishing parent, the community, is training it to derive all the joy it can from life, consistently with the joy of others and the day's duties, when its turn comes to don the *toga virilis*. It will have learned by that time that a development of its characteristic human powers is the richest possession it can have, and, coming to adolescence, will not at once cast aside the work of the teacher and dissipate its energy in the crude indulgence of elementary passions and futile imaginings. Neither child nor adult will shrink from work which stimulates the intelligence or refines the taste, and a fine alert race, impatient of untruth, injustice, and suffering, will set itself to develop fully the resources of this planet.

CHAPTER X

THE CLERICAL SHAM

THROUGHOUT the preceding chapters there have been resentful or disdainful references to the Churches, and it may be suspected that, in assailing other people's prejudices, I have cherished and proceeded upon the anti-clerical prejudice. A very cursory examination will, however, suffice to show that these criticisms were sound and pertinent, and are not due to some mysterious antipathy to the profession to which I once belonged. Few of those ugly or mischievous traditions which form what I have called the smothering ash in the intellectual activity of the nation have not the general support of the clergy. Few of the reforms here suggested do not meet their hostility. They constitute one of the most injurious conservative forces in modern life. Their bodies are strewn over the whole battlefield of the nineteenth century, and not one in a thousand of them fought on the side of progress. The esteem in which they are still widely held and the pretexts by which they guard this esteem are the last, and by no means the least, of those shams which hamper our advance and distract our energy.

A full and detailed indictment of the clergy would fill several columns, and I must confine myself here to two or three considerations which are at once sufficiently drastic and easily demonstrable. I will therefore be content to show :

1. That the clergy claim and receive a large measure of public confidence on the ground that they are the guardians of the most sacred and beneficent truths, yet impose on the less educated masses a preposterous collection of untruths, or statements which many of their own scholars, and most lay scholars, regard as untrue.

2. That the clergy pose as the most sensitive and effective custodians of our morals, yet their procedure is unjust, spiteful, and deceptive to an extent which would not be tolerated in any lay profession.

3. That the clergy represent that their creed civilised Europe and is necessary for the maintenance of its civilisation, yet their influence and their ideas retarded the evolution of European civilisation for centuries, and retard it to-day wherever they have sufficient power or are immune from weighty criticism.

In enumerating the untruths which are still imposed by the clergy, I will not linger over the Old Testament. When you censure them to-day for attaching a sacred value to this collection of ancient Jewish literature, they are apt to reply that your criticism is forty years out of date. Every educated clergyman, they exclaim, now acknowledges that the Old Testament is a mixture of Babylonian

legends, primitive tribal traditions, and moral literature of a naïve and very interesting description. Whether this statement is true or no I must leave to the judgment of those who have a closer acquaintance with the modern clergy. Only two years ago I was persuaded, in an idle hour on a liner, to listen to a sermon delivered by a young clergyman who had just issued, with honours, from a highly modern Wesleyan college. It was on the miracles of Moses in the wilderness—ingeniously relieved by references to such other miracles as the appearance of a cross to Constantine—and accepted them as literally as did Peter the Hermit. Religious periodicals and books and parish-magazines suggest that there is a good deal still of this medieval credulity ; or that, at least, the number of “ educated clergymen ” must be somewhat restricted. But let us accept the assurance that the educated clergy do accept the Old Testament at its true historical value. In which case we must be content to express our surprise that no clergyman seems to have the least scruple about imposing these things on young children, and rustic congregations, and less cultivated races—than which there is no more cowardly form of untruth : and that some of the most notoriously unreliable and barbaric pages of the Old Testament are read, Sunday by Sunday, as “ the word of God ” in all the Christian Churches of the world, under the official orders of every ecclesiastical authority in the world.

However, since these cultivated ecclesiastics

smile at our criticism of the Old Testament, and see nothing improper in a deception of the ignorant, of which any body of professional laymen would be incapable, let us turn to the New Testament. It is always useful to consider the attitude of the clergy in its historical perspective. A hundred years ago they were defending against the Deists the absolute truthfulness of the Old Testament. Christ had promised the Holy Spirit to the Church : the Holy Spirit could not possibly tolerate untruth : therefore the teaching of the Church for sixteen centuries must be right. Within two generations they have, in a great number, abandoned the inerrancy of the Old Testament, without abandoning the Holy Spirit. It seems only the other day when Cardinal Newman pleaded wistfully that we were not compelled, under pain of eternal damnation, to believe that Tobit's dog did really wag its tail. However, outside Scotland clergymen do seem to be free to form their own opinions on such allegations as that a whale swallowed a man and housed him for three days. But in thus admitting that "inspiration" was consistent with error, they have put the New Testament also in the hand of the critic.

It is well to remember, too, that this modern criticism of the Bible is conducted almost entirely by divines. The average churchgoer has an impression that these terrible people who are known as "the Higher Critics" are anti-clerical laymen : possibly lascivious gentlemen whose real ambition

is to undermine the salutary discipline imposed by the Churches. They are, of course, on the contrary, nearly all ordained clergymen, and very conscientious clergymen, of some branch of the Church. Rationalists never criticise the Bible. It has become a branch of theological scholarship. I once—having been challenged by the local clergyman, who promptly disappeared when I arrived—gave a lecture on the divinity of Christ to an audience of Presbyterian artisans, and assured them that the views and arguments I put before them were taken solely from the works of distinguished and highly honoured theologians. Their amazement and horror were most amusing. They had not the dimmest idea that controversy on these points lay merely between advanced and not-advanced members of the Christian clergy; and that their local oracle had, in effect, merely been imposing on them the opinions of the less learned divines in opposition to the more learned.

And this fact dispenses me from the need to drag the reader into the somewhat tiring labyrinth of proof and disproof which these warring theologians have constructed. Nothing could be further from my mind than the presumptuous and immodest wish to brand the clergy as dishonest, and their beliefs as superstitious, because I happen to regard those beliefs as false. Let the position be clearly understood. A study of the *Hibbert Journal* or any scholarly theological periodical, or of any batch of learned theological works, will apprise

any person that what are ordinarily conceived to be the fundamental positions of the Christian religion are challenged by a large proportion of distinguished divines. Pleas of "reconstruction" are constantly put before us; and at the Church of England Congress in 1912 it was plainly decided by the presiding Archbishop of York that the "advanced" theologians had a legitimate place in the Church. It is not a question of a few controverted points in the scheme of Christian doctrine. No point that is specifically Christian is left unchallenged. The divinity and miracles—especially the miraculous birth and resurrection—of Christ, the prophecies, the doctrine of heaven and hell, the divine guidance of the Church, the fall and redemption of man—all these characteristic doctrines are gravely disputed within the frontiers of the Churches themselves, wherever freedom of expression is permitted.

One would prefer to rely on theologians only in such a matter, but for my purpose it is not immaterial to add that outside the ranks of the clergy scholarship is overwhelmingly against these doctrines. There has been a good deal of unsubstantial talk about the beliefs of living men of intellectual eminence, but resolute efforts have been made of late years to wring from them a profession of Christian belief, and the result has been so meagre that my statement is fully justified. A large number declare that they are on the side of "religion." But one has only to reflect that even

Sir Oliver Lodge warmly professes to be a Christian—and is, in fact, welcomed to read the lessons in church—to see how little is conveyed by such expressions. The supreme effort of the Churches to secure adhesions of this kind is probably found in Mr. Tabrum's *Religious Beliefs of Scientists* (1910), and a study of that extraordinary jumble of the living and the dead, the distinguished and the obscure, the really believing Christians and the men who are notoriously not, will convince any person of the failure of the Churches to obtain the literal adhesion of even a respectable proportion of our distinguished men : not men of science merely—it is a stupid error to suppose that the decay of faith is more or less confined to them—but men of eminence in any department of research or intellectual life. Not one in ten of them, in any educated country of the Christian world to-day, has ever professed a belief in the doctrines or statements I have enumerated ; and vague professions of a regard for religion do not concern me here.

Now I am, as I said, not passing any personal opinion on these Christian teachings : I am merely drawing attention to their position in modern life. The uncultivated masses and the body of the clergy who preach to these masses accept the miraculous birth, death, resurrection, and all the rest, quite implicitly. Here and there one finds a preacher who dissents ; I am speaking of the mass. At the middle level of mental culture, among both clergy

and laity, dissent becomes much more frequent. At the highest level of theological scholarship it would be fair to say that the dissenters are almost, if not quite, as numerous as the believers; and at the higher level of lay culture, where opinions may be more freely formed and expressed, the dissenters are the overwhelming majority. These men may be theists or agnostics or Christians in the broader sense of the word, but the great majority of them do not believe in these distinctively Christian doctrines. Yet the Churches, wherever they are not kept in check by this critical element, invest these doctrines with the most sacred and confident character: stamp them as unquestioned truths on the minds of children and uneducated people, and put them forward as their official and authoritative doctrines. Nay, there is hardly a theologian in any church who does not, when Christmas and Easter annually occur, lend his official and most solemn countenance to these discarded or disputed traditions.

This would not, could not, be done in any branch of lay culture. One may justly insist on one's opinion in any disputed theme, but what would be the attitude of our leaders of culture if any authoritative historian, philosopher, or scientist attempted to impose on the inexpert, as an unquestioned truth, some older opinion which a large proportion of the expert regarded as false or questionable? What would they say to a responsible teacher in one of these branches of lay

culture who read certain statements to those who trusted him, and said within his own mind : " This is what people thought a thousand years ago " ? A clergyman told me that it was with this mental reservation that he read the creeds and gospels on Sundays. What would a philosopher, or historian, or scientist say, if his department of culture were an organic association with a public and authoritative teaching, and this public teaching contained statements which a large proportion of the leading representatives regarded as false ? And what would he say to any colleagues who urged him to allow these things to stand because a change might lessen the respect of the general public for their authority ?

This situation reflects gravely on the character of Christian ministers. One need not attempt the futile task of estimating what proportion of the clergy believe the things they teach, but we are constantly receiving proof, especially posthumous proof, that large numbers of them do not. I have been severely rebuked for suggesting such a thing, but when I find a group of young Oxford divines saying plumply, in an important recent work (*Foundations*), that Christian theology is " out of harmony with science, philosophy, and scholarship," I can only say that I trust a sufficient number of the clergy are educated enough to know it. The majority of the clergy are, however, sufficiently ignorant of " science, philosophy, and scholarship " to be in good faith, and one ought not to press the

indictment in this sense. At sea I listen occasionally, from some safe distance, to sermons, and am amazed that even a fair proportion of the passengers can sit with grave faces during the delivery of such empty and ignorant vapourings. One reflects that all over the Christian world priests are similarly dogmatising on the most profound problems of life, and not one in a thousand of them has an elementary knowledge of those branches of modern research which a public guide ought to command. It is not the decay, but the survival, of churchgoing that perplexes one.

There is, however, another aspect of the matter which requires serious attention. There have been, from the earliest ages of the Christian Church, men of superior intelligence and independent character who refused to submit to the dictation of the clergy. There is no need to recall how the clergy dealt with them. Christian ministers have in this regard the most abominable record in the whole history of civilised religion. Some day it will be put side by side with that of the priests of Saturn or of Quetzalcotl, who offered human sacrifices. All that need be noted here is the effrontery with which modern clerical writers defend their predecessors. If the principles on which they base their defence are valid, they would again be compelled to burn heretics if they obtained power. The Church of Rome is bold enough to acknowledge this. Huxley tells how his distinguished Catholic friend, Dr. J. Ward, warmly assented to this, but we have had

since then a more authoritative indication. A work of Canon Law which was published at Rome under the "enlightened" rule of Leo XIII., and with his emphatic personal approval—the *Institutiones Juris Canonici* of Father de Luca—proves at length the duty of the Church to put to death heretics.

However, we will not waste rhetoric over the past or over an impossible future. What policy have the modern clergy, who are unable to induce the State to burn dissenters, substituted for that of their predecessors? A policy that is, to a very great extent, unjust, spiteful, and dishonourable: a policy that, in the very name of truth, is marked by a more flagrant indifference to truth than you will find in any other reputable department of modern life.

The first feature of this policy will be seen by any generally informed person who will take the trouble to read a batch of religious works or periodicals. He will find numbers of statements of the most amazing inaccuracy. It is, no doubt, an exceptional thing for a clerical writer to make a statement which is, to his conscious knowledge, untrue. The very suggestion seems prejudiced, but is there a vast difference between imposing official untruths on ignorant congregations and supporting these untruths by others? The constant repetition of these ancient and discredited formulæ does not induce a very punctilious temper in regard to truth. If it is quite lawful to repeat from the Old or the New Testament historical statements

which are not true or are gravely disputed, why not other historical statements which have got into ecclesiastical currency?

Usually, however, the attitude of the writer seems to be one of culpable indifference to the truth or untruth of the statements he makes. He finds in some previous writer a statement which supports his case, and he reproduces it without inquiry. If he were a mere layman, engaged in some branch of profane culture, he would not dare to repeat, without further inquiry, statements which he found made in his own sectarian interest by men of no high authority or original scholarship. The clergy, however, do this habitually, and one is compelled to conclude that they are more or less indifferent about the truth of their assertions, if those assertions are favourable to religion. Just as I write the press reports Dr. R. F. Horton telling a congregation that a British regiment was saved at Mons by the appearance of a legion of angels, and assuring his audience that this silly myth is "repeated by so many witnesses that if anything can be established by contemporary evidence it is established." The story has gone the round of our pulpits and religious press.

I am speaking, however, from a particularly wide experience of religious literature. For thirty years—ten years as a clerical student or professor, and twenty years as an interested observer of religious controversy—I have devoted much time to books and journals of this kind, and I repeat that there

is no other branch of literature so flagrantly inaccurate and unscrupulous. A religious periodical (*The Christian World*, 20th August 1903), in the course of an editorial on "Candour in the Pulpit" (meaning lack of candour in the pulpit), said: "A foremost modern theologian, by no means of the radical school, has recorded his significant judgment that one of the main characteristics of apologetic literature is its lack of honesty; and no one who has studied theology can doubt that it has suffered more than any other science from equivocal phraseology." When a journal which has to consult the feelings of a large backward clientele uses this language, we may conclude that the situation is really bad. In fact, not even political journalism betrays such gross carelessness as to the truth of the statements with which it assails its opponents. "The more sacred our ideas are, the more savagely we fight for them," said Mr. Chesterton, defending the Inquisition. Mr. Chesterton's own genial method (except that one recognises the taint in his *Victorian Age in Literature*) disproves his aphorism. There is not the slightest excuse for the gross procedure of religious writers.

I have in various works and articles given hundreds of examples of this procedure, and will be content to deal summarily with two of the chief types of misrepresentation—those relating to history and those relating to science. The classical examples in history are the clerical legends about the morality of the pagans. Here the clerical lie goes on its way

from age to age without the slightest regard of the progress of historical research. Discoveries in the ruins (such as the Hammurabi Code, temple-literature, etc.) and a closer scrutiny of the sources used by the Greek historian Herodotus have made it quite clear that the old Mesopotamian civilisations were comparable to ours in moral sentiment and practice. Instead of women having to sacrifice their virginity in the temples at Babylon, we have abundant evidence that chastity was demanded and valued in brides, and that the priests insisted on purity. Every other moral sentiment was equally developed. We find the same high moral development in Egypt. All this is disregarded, and the superiority of the Hebrew and Christian sacred books is maintained by a resolute propagation of ancient fables.

In regard to Greece and Rome the practice is even worse. The exceptional features of their life are described as normal and general features, and the very abundant literature which has put in its true light the character of Athens and Rome is completely ignored. Special periods of vice under bad emperors (who, in the aggregate, ruled only seventy years out of three hundred and twenty) are spread over the whole of Roman history. The gossip and democratic rhetoric of Juvenal are pressed literally, in spite of the judgment of all serious historians. The works which exhibit the better side of Rome, and the inscriptions which show a very high degree of character and humanitarianism under the Stoics,

are wholly suppressed. The balanced verdict of modern historians is scandalously flouted. At all costs it must be shown that Europe needed regeneration, and that Christian morality was far superior to pagan ; and so the clergy continue, in spite of protests from some of their own lay scholars (Emil Reich, for instance), to draw a flagrantly untruthful picture of the morals of Greece and Rome.

But this misrepresentation is venial in comparison with the misrepresentation of later European history. The clerical story of the moral change that came over Europe when it embraced Christianity is one of the grossest impostures ever laid on the human mind. Even clerics like Dean Milman sufficiently refuted it decades ago, but it flourishes as profitably as ever. From the pulpit of St. Paul's to the tin chapels of Mudville it is one of the most treasured traditions, and perhaps no picture is more familiar to Christian audiences than that of Rome, drunk with its vices, reeling to the foot of the cross and embracing sobriety. It is a calculated clerical myth in every line. The Stoics reformed Rome at a time when the Christians were a mere handful of obscure people, and the magnificent work done and institutions set up by the Stoics were not sustained by the Church. Even in regard to the persecutions the clergy still repeat the legend which modern historians recognise as based on a mass of medieval forgeries. Civilisation sank rapidly until it touched the depth of the early Middle Ages, and, as Milman candidly recognised, the claim that at least virtue

increased is the reverse of the truth. The Church did not denounce or abolish slavery : it discouraged education : it abased woman : it set back a thousand years the development of culture. Yet our clerical writers repeat the medieval falsehoods as fluently as if modern history did not exist.

The later period is just as grossly falsified by Catholic writers, but here the Protestant—who has somehow convinced himself that the Holy Spirit abandoned Europe to the devil for a thousand years—begins to cry for candour. Much of the Protestant literature is uncritical and unscrupulous in its use of authorities ; it is, however, instructive in comparison with the kind of history purveyed by the “ Catholic Truth Society.” There is hardly a candid historian in the Church, even in Germany and the United States. The latest historian of the Papacy, Dr. L. Pastor, is certainly entitled to respect for his effort, though even he does not present all the facts ; while men like Cardinal Gasquet are appallingly one-sided. I am, however, thinking mainly of the “ popular ” literature, on which no stricture could be too severe. Indeed, when it comes to the modern period, both Protestant and Catholic literature is scandalous. One often finds Voltaire, Rousseau, and Paine described as “ atheists,” and the most slovenly observations on the Revolution. Roosevelt’s description of Paine as a “ dirty little atheist ” is a good indication of the kind of literature that even an educated religious man may read.

On the scientific side the inaccuracy and carelessness are just as great, but the field is too vast for consideration here. The conflict in regard to evolution has produced an extraordinary literature on the clerical side, and, to the amusement of students of science, it still flows from the religious press and refreshes suburban faith. Men who have never devoted a month to the study of science engage in conflict with the most authoritative masters of biology, and thrill their ignorant followers with the vigour and dexterity of their fencing. These Jesuit and other writers have, of course, set up a lay-figure for their valiant attacks. They misrepresent the views and motives of the man they oppose, give garbled quotations from his works, and support their own antiquated positions by quotations from scientific men who lived in the earlier phases of the controversy. No trick is more common in this class of literature than to justify obsolete statements by quoting "authorities" who died long ago, and leaving the inexperienced reader to suppose that they are modern men of science; while clerics who could not distinguish a palæolithic from a civilised skull write pompous essays on such subjects as the evolution of man. Works of this kind circulate by the hundred in the churches even to-day, literally deluding millions of people, while the works of more expert writers are denounced as "against religion" and unfit to read.

Still more flagrant is the clerical behaviour in

rebutting the general belief that men of science have for the most part abandoned Christianity. They—with the support of a man like Sir O. Lodge—talk glibly of the death of “Victorian materialism” and the rebirth of spiritualism; whereas Huxley, Tyndall, Spencer, Darwin, Clifford, Lewes, and every other Victorian man of science repudiated materialism. When you ask who the modern men are who have abandoned the views of the Huxleian generation and come to favour religion, they produce an extraordinarily confused list of names. I have referred to their *magnum opus* in this department, Tabrum’s *Religious Beliefs of Scientists*. It actually includes two prominent members of the Rationalist Press Association; while men like Lodge and Wallace and Crookes are included among the more orthodox. Of late years it is the fashion to impress ignorant congregations with the names of W. James, Eucken, and Bergson; whereas James and Bergson are not even theists, and Eucken professes a form of theism which any Church would heatedly repudiate. The members of the various sects are literally and most scandalously duped on this point.

I have claimed that the clergy are spiteful and unjust, as well as careless about truth. There are very few popular religious writers who seem capable of giving a correct account of the views they are criticising, and there are very many who manipulate quotations with the effect of grossly deceiving their readers. Worse still, the clergy habitually

slander their critics, and these slanders live for years in spite of refutation. Seven years ago they began to circulate a silly and obviously incredible charge that Professor Haeckel "forged" illustrations in support of his case, and, though the libel was at once thoroughly refuted by Professor Schmidt, it is still current. Only a few months ago I received from India documents which showed that the Jesuits there were still insisting on it. A friend of mine informed me that he heard one Scottish preacher, in the course of a public lecture on Haeckel, assure his audience, on the authority of a "friend of Haeckel's," that that venerable scientist was a man of most licentious life! No charge is too gross to repeat, if it discredits an "enemy of the faith." Dozens of times I have heard of the wildest calumnies about myself which circulate throughout the English-speaking world, because I have occasionally written a critical work (always grossly misrepresented in the Catholic press) about the Catholic Church. I never belonged to the Catholic priesthood: I was discharged from it for fraud: I left it in order to marry a nun I had seduced: and so on. Only the lighter of these things are put in print, and then always with the name omitted. Only a few months ago a priest (and Education-Councillor) in a Scottish town gravely assured a schoolmistress, in the presence of an acquaintance of mine, that his Church held unshakable proofs of my vicious ways. As usual, my request that they would

say so in print was ignored. Most ex-priests have the same experience. One of the most refined and religious of these seceders, a man who became a most respected professor at Oxford, was pursued by the calumny (never printed) that he had shown indecent photographs to servant-girls!

This tactic of the Church militant is happily so notorious that little harm is done among the general public, but Catholics are gravely deluded, in the hope that they will be induced to refrain from reading any except their own mendacious literature.

Yet one of the most familiar themes of the men who pursue this tactic is that they alone can inspire high character! Notoriously insincere in their professions, teachers of doctrines which the higher culture of our time and many of their own leading scholars condemn, living in an atmosphere of untruth and unreality, relying on a literature which is generally as indifferent to truth as it is to grace, unscrupulously repeating idle slanders of their opponents, they ask us to believe that they are genuinely concerned about the future of society if we continue to reject their authority. It is not strange that the great cities of the modern world are unmoved by their dirges.

The third point of my indictment is that the clergy have forged the historical credentials by which they lay claim to our respect. I have already observed that their version of the history of Europe is peculiar to their own literature, and I have else-

where (*The Bible in Europe*) shown in detail how worthless it is. The "conversion" of Europe to Christianity in the fourth century was, as every historian of the period shows, an enforcement of the new religion on Europe by imperial authority, accompanied by the most violent and bloody repression of all other religions. We then have the witness of contemporary Christian writers that this "conversion" was followed by a general moral and intellectual decline. The great reforms which Rome had inaugurated were destroyed, and Europe sank into the ignorance, superstition, and grossness of the Middle Ages. It is quite true that the triumph of Christianity coincided with the overthrow of civilisation by the northern tribes, but the Teutonic tribes were not inferior to the Arabs or Turks (whom Mohammedanism civilised in the course of a century or two), and the Church soon obtained despotic power over them. The Eastern Empire, I may add, was *not* dominated by the barbarians, yet it also suffered a grave moral and intellectual decline. The fact is, that the clergy made no effort to induce the barbarians to restore the old school-system, to reconstruct the Roman law, to free the slaves (and, later, the serfs), to adjust their high native ideal of womanhood to the new social order, or to rebuild the fine civic and philanthropic system of the Romans. Culture fell so low that the very promising germs of later Greek science were allowed to die, and nearly the whole of the surviving Greek

literature was unknown in Europe for many centuries. The trade in spurious relics, the rapacity and unscrupulousness of the Papacy, the coarseness of the nobles and people, and the general sexual licence of priests and monks were almost incredible.

This dark age began to receive the first rays of new light in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and historians are agreed that the new light came from the civilisation of the Spanish Moors. This it was that, by introducing Greek literature and its Arab commentators, led to the early revival of science. But the cult of the grossest relics and superstitions continued, and the clergy repressed, or inspired rulers to repress, all dissent with more ferocity than ever. During the one general persecution of the early Christians by the Romans about two thousand had suffered for the faith ; and only a few hundreds can be added from the earlier sporadic persecutions. But within fifty years of the establishment of Christianity in the Empire, tens of thousands of Donatists, Manichæans, Arians, Pagans, etc., were done to death, and hundreds of thousands ruined or maltreated, by the triumphant Christians. In later centuries it was the turn of Monophysites, Monothelites, etc., and in the first quarter of the thirteenth century alone more than a million heretics were done to death in Languedoc. If the Jews and witches and others who suffered on religious grounds be added, the " butcher's bill " of the new religion passes ten millions ; and beyond

these are the countless millions of those who suffered something less than death.

We look back to-day with feelings of horror on this ghastly carnage, especially when we remember the absurd character of the doctrines which the heretics assailed and the immorality of the clergy and monks who were primarily responsible for the executions and massacres. But this savage repression of independent thought⁺ had consequences of an even more disastrous nature on European civilisation. It not only removed from the community many of the more courageous and more intelligent stocks, but it intimidated others from using their powers, except in the futile argumentation of the Schoolmen. The result was a prolonged suspension of the development of the higher culture which was destined to give Europe its supremacy. It will hardly be doubted to-day that this culture was contained in the scientific works of the Greeks, especially the Alexandrian Greeks. The Arabs brought this culture to Spain, and, chiefly through the mediation of the Jews, it was slowly introduced into Europe and inspired such scholars as Gilbert, Roger Bacon, Albert the Great, and Copernicus. Physics, chemistry, and medicine began their development. But the fate of Roger Bacon and Albert and Vesalius sufficiently reminds us of the Church's attitude toward the new culture, and the story of the hampering of intellectual progress in the exact study of nature has been repeatedly told. The scholastic fever, which had absorbed

the energies of most of the acutest minds in Europe, had to disappear, and the power of the Church to be enfeebled, before the civilisation of Europe could advance.

The further introduction of Greek literature, when the Turks drove the Greeks from Constantinople, the invention of printing, the expansion of commerce and navigation, and the weakening of Church-authority by the Reformation, opened the modern phase of the development of European civilisation. It is only for the last of these changes that a section of the clergy may plausibly claim our gratitude, and even here we must make reserves. The share of the laity in the Reformation was greater than the share of the clergy, and the aim of the Reformed clergy was by no means to free and stimulate the intelligence of Europe. They frowned on lay culture, and burned their opponents, as inhumanly as the Roman priests did. It was not until the growth of sects had further enfeebled ecclesiastical authority, and a large body of lay scholars had arisen, that Europe became civilised, even in a generous sense of the word. Then science and philosophy and history grew to the proportions which distinguish "modern times," and a resolute social and humanitarian movement began to remove those appalling injustices of the industrial and political order which the clergy had witnessed in silence for more than a thousand years.

I repeat that this is not an eccentric view of

the development of European civilisation, but the view taken by historians ever since their science was emancipated from clerical control. The view which the clergy still sedulously propagate, that the Christian religion inspired the civilisation of Europe, is the most preposterous historical sham which we still entertain. It is unintelligible how a scholar like Mr. Bryce can give even a qualified support to it. In the minds of most people it is a pitiful confusion of ideas associated with one of the most elementary fallacies known to the logician. The fallacy is the syllogism which suffices for the majority of the faithful: Europe is the great centre of civilisation, Europe was Christian during the development of this civilisation, therefore Christianity was the inspirer of the civilisation. The inference is foolish enough in itself, but it becomes ludicrous when we reflect on the facts. Europe was civilised before it became Christian; it inherited all the best culture and experience of Egypt, Mesopotamia, Persia, Greece, and Rome. But Europe lost its civilisation when it became Christian, very largely because the new religion found culture dangerous to its superstitions and repressed it. And Europe owes its return to civilisation to the revival of pagan ideas, and it advances in civilisation in proportion as it discards Christianity.

The confusion of ideas is just as foolish as the fallacy. Europe is "great" in two very different senses. Most of the white nations are "great"

in the vastness of their territory and the wealth they have derived from subject peoples. To connect this form of greatness with the Sermon on the Mount is audacious: it is a practice which really belongs to the age when English merchants who waxed fat on the negro-slave trade could complacently give the name "Jesus" to their vessels. This form of greatness frankly rested on buccaneering. Europe is great also in intellectual development, with the scientific and technical achievements to which this has led. We need not ask what particular Christian sentiment has inspired this; we know too well the share the clergy have had in repressing it.

Lastly, Europe is great in the cultivation of humane sentiment and the endeavour to practise social justice. It is here that the clergy usually claim their usefulness; and there is hardly a bolder mis-statement in their literature than this. The New Testament contains not a single moral sentiment that was unknown to the Greeks and Romans, and to the later Jews: the moral sentiments of the New Testament are so vague and elementary that not a single priest denounced slavery for nine hundred years, and not a Church has denounced war for more than eighteen hundred years: the Christian ethic was so uninspiring that Europe reeked with vice and crime and war and social injustice until the end of the eighteenth or beginning of the nineteenth century: when the reform began, in the nineteenth century, hardly a single

priest aided it (until it had won millions of adherents), and the bishops almost unanimously opposed it: and the humanitarianism of modern times is an almost exclusively lay movement, gaining power and fervour in proportion as we sweep the clergy aside. Europe was civilised under the Roman and Greek pagans, and it is civilised, in the same broad sense, under the modern pagans; it was not civilised in the intervening period, and the worst features of its life to-day are, not recent outgrowths, but inheritances from the Christian past.

The pleas which some of the clergy, who know a little history, urge against this plain generalisation of the historical facts are curious. The majority, of course, knowing nothing of history, repeat the conventional untruths, but a few would tell us that this modern humanitarianism is due to a belated appreciation of the Christian ethic. Are justice, sympathy, truthfulness, kindness, and honour confined to the Christian ethic? Was there ever a great moralist, or a mature civilisation, which failed to appreciate them? Is not the modern humanitarian movement plainly characterised by a determination to do good to men, not for a reward in heaven or because Christ (like so many others) enjoined it, but because you cannot have a fine mind and character without experiencing this determination? Were there, in the fifteen hundred years of Christian domination, not enough men with intelligence enough to perceive the practical

bearing of Christ's ethic? Have these clerical writers frankly abandoned the claim that the "Spirit of God" guided their predecessors during those fifteen centuries? And have they read a line of the modern literature which shows that there is not one humane sentiment in the Gospels that was not well known to the Jews before the time of Christ?

The case of the clergy is a tissue of sophistry and untruth from beginning to end. They have done nothing as a body for European civilisation, in proportion to their power and leisure and resources. They did not even teach it chastity. They hindered the development of the culture which it vitally needed, and dissipated its finest intelligence in the tilling of barren soil. They fought fiercely for their own wealth and power, and were for fifteen hundred years a mighty parasitic growth on the working community. They kept the bandage of illiteracy on the eyes of ninety per cent. of their people for fifteen hundred years, and dined merrily with the nobles who exploited the people. They exacted respect in virtue of their supposed close communion with an all-holy God; and they were themselves, especially in their highest representatives, immoral and hypocritical in an appalling proportion, were brutal in coercing their critics, were traffickers in spurious and sordid relics, and were, when noble men and women at last won liberty from them, ignorant, slanderous, and careless of truth as no reputable body of laymen would stoop to become.

Their record is as poor as their opportunity was great, and the modern world is, in strict proportion to the growth of education, passing disdainfully by the open doors of their churches. Of the twelve million inhabitants of the three greatest cities of Europe hardly two millions attend church ; and if it were not for the incessant, feverish, and highly organised efforts of the clergy themselves, church-going would show a further rapid and enormous shrinkage. Yet even in this last phase we find them mumbling to ill-instructed congregations about their glorious record in Europe (crowned by a war of four hundred million people), about the wickedness of an age which prefers the indulgence of its passions to their serene guidance, and about the terrible doom which they foresee for Europe if it does not return to its medieval guardians.

As I observed in dealing with the political organisation, Christianity is not a set of ideas but a wealthy and powerful corporation. Once it was a body of men holding certain beliefs : now it is, in essence, an organisation for the enforcement of those beliefs. It is, in the main, this professional or corporate interest which sustains Christianity in Europe : but it is losing heavily. I have shown (*Decay of the Church of Rome*) that the oldest branch of the Church has lost about a hundred million followers in a hundred years. I do not think that the Protestant Churches, being more progressive and less offensive in their tactics, have lost so heavily, but the extraordinary decay of church-

going in cities like Berlin, London, and New York is suggestive. In spite of all the tricks and devices of the clergy—the vestments and concerts, the matrimonial agencies and philanthropic coercion, the Y.M.C.A.'s and P.S.A.'s and all the rest—the people still fall away. No proof could be formulated to-day that even the majority of the people of Europe are Christians.

The thoughtful minority in the religious world are retreating upon the liberal theism which so many of our cultural leaders profess, or upon some even more vague mysticism. Into this further province it is not my intention to go. The world will, no doubt, long remain divided in opinion, or in sentiment, on fundamental religious issues, and for my practical purpose this difference is of no account. There is, however, one last consideration put forward by the clergy which it may be useful to consider.

It is represented that we are in danger of a triumph of "materialism," and it is therefore wise to cling, in spite of their errors, to the Churches which so solidly represent "spiritualism." Since many people have regarded me as peculiarly exposed to this danger of falling under the evil spell of "materialism," I have made eager inquiries among spiritualist writers as to the nature of "spirit." I am still hopefully inquiring. Most of the anæmic mystics who gush over the word cannot tell you what it means. They have a vague conviction that the spiritual is immensely more

important and productive of good than the material, and that therefore materialism is the most appalling blight that can fall on a nation. These prophets of evil are, as I have previously observed, not strong in history. They do not explain how Confucianism (which Sir Edwin Arnold, accurately enough, calls materialism) proved so great an inspiration in China and Japan : how the Stoics (who refused utterly to believe in spirit) wrought so much good and inspired so fine a character at Rome : or how this materialistic age of ours is so idealistic. They know only that we must at all costs cultivate the spiritual—read spiritual writers, respect spiritual persons, encourage spiritual clergymen and artists and actors—and loathe materialism from the bottom of our hearts. And it is therefore quite natural to suppose that all that is precious in life and progress depends on the belief in the existence of “spirits.”

In point of fact, we have here entangled ourselves in an extraordinary confusion. The cultivation of intelligence, fine sentiment, and straight character has nothing whatever to do with the question whether the mind of man is or is not divisible into parts, or has or has not “inertia” : which are the only philosophic distinctions between matter and spirit that I have discovered. The tradition of the spirituality of the mind is responsible for this confusion. *If* the mind is a spirit, then spirit is assuredly the source of the finest things in life, and is far superior to matter. But that is just the

question at issue ; and it really does not matter two pins for practical purposes whether the mind is extended and inert (in the scientific sense), or unextended and devoid of inertia. One has only to substitute clear conceptions for vague terms, and the whole controversy is reduced to absurdity. Whichever side wins in the academic battle about the nature of mind, it remains as true as ever that the cultivation of mind is one of the most important aims that men can set up. Why on earth should we be less disposed to cultivate the mind of the race if some sudden turn of scientific advance were to prove it " a function of the brain " ? It remains true that our race owes the position it occupies entirely to mind : that our civilisation owes its ascendancy over barbarism to mind : and that we rely entirely on the further cultivation of mind—of intelligence, will, and emotion—to destroy those shams which impede our progress and curtail our prosperity and happiness. It is ludicrous to say that we cannot thus cultivate mind unless we believe it to be an indivisible and incomprehensible and indefinable something. It would, in fact, be less absurd to say that we should have more confidence in our power to cultivate mind if we regarded it as an organic function, subject to definite treatment.

As to the lapse of a belief in personal immortality, it is not less absurd to say that this would paralyse our efforts. As Ruskin says on the point : " The shortness of life is not, to any rational person,

a conclusive reason for wasting the space of it which may be granted him." That magnificent preface to *The Crown of Wild Olive* ought long ago to have silenced these dismal sophists. The fact is, that this age of ours, in proportion as it grows indifferent to the old legends and the appeals of the clergy, rises toward heights which man never climbed before. The clergy are most amusingly puzzled. Popes tell us that we are children of perdition, reeling into an earthly abyss, to say nothing of a deeper beyond: archbishops say that we are just beginning to realise the true import of Christ's teaching. The candid man or woman will look searchingly for himself or herself into the heart of our age, and, if he or she have an accurate knowledge of earlier ages, will recognise that it throbs with a human idealism, tenderness, and sympathy which have been unknown in Europe since the old pagans departed.

Let me end on that note. The religious person will close this work, if he perseveres to the end, with a series of horrified exclamations. Socialism! Immoralism! Republicanism! Materialism! Malthusianism! I shudder under the shower of horrid epithets, yet would ask this outraged reader to forget "'isms" for a moment and consider a simple statement of the human faith I here present.

The ideals which I hold in supreme regard are truth in our beliefs and statements, justice and generosity in our actions, the co-operation of all men to make the earth happier. I am in tempera-

ment no hedonist. Thirty years of assiduous study, of much severe trial, of stoical endurance have left me more or less insensible to what men and women usually call happiness. My personal desires are sated in that I may, in circumstances of peace and modest comfort, devote myself to intellectual labour and the employment in the cause of progress of such influence as I have. I see no purpose imposed on life, and I therefore conclude that men and women are free to put such purpose on their collective life as they deem advisable. No purpose seems to be wiser, grander, or more inspiring than that they should seek to assuage the last pang of remediable pain and bring sunshine into the dark places of the earth. For me there is no heaven ; and therefore the spectacle of those thousands passing daily and nightly into the silence, after lives of pain, misery, or brutality, while we cling to the barbaric traditions or ill-devised institutions that have come down to us, is an intolerable goad. Let us have criticism and scrutiny of all that we do and all that we believe ; and let us have courage to reject all that we think false and purify all that we find corrupted. Let us assert that mighty power of which we are conscious ; and, if it take ages to undo all the errors of the past and agree upon a plan of a regenerated earth, let us at least strive to awaken men to a consciousness of their power and of the evils they have to remove. These are my suggestions of what is wrong in life and how it may be righted. It may be materialism, this plain human

gospel of mine ; but it seems to me that, if it could be carried into effect, there would spread gradually over this earth such joy and freedom and prosperity as men's prophets have babbled of in their dying dreams.

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